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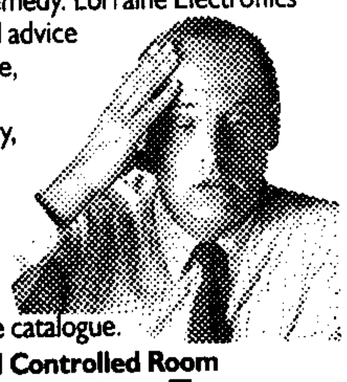

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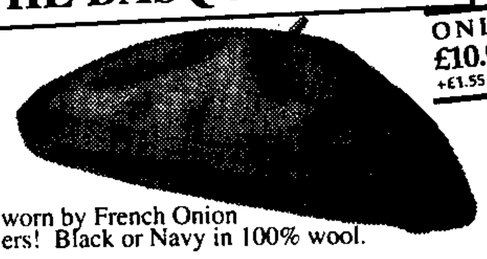

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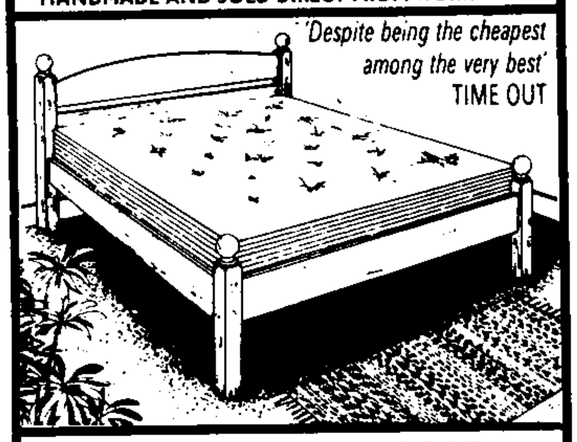

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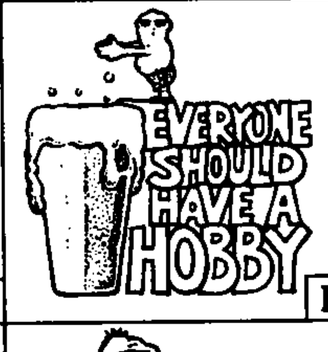

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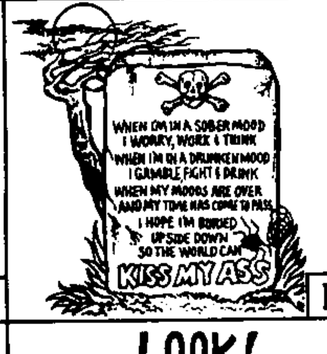
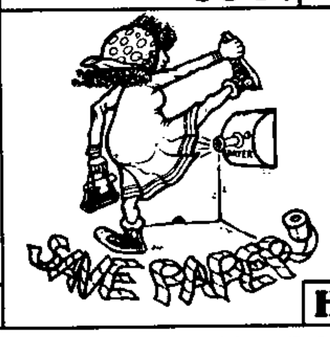

WHEN I'M IN A SOBER MOOD
I WORRY, WORK & THINK
WHEN I'M IN A DRUNKEN MOOD
I GAMBLE, FIGHT & DRINK
WHEN MY MOODS ARE OVER
AND MY TIME HAS COME TO PASS
I HOPE I'M BURIED
UPSIDE DOWN
SO THE WORLD CAN
KISS MY ASS
F

G



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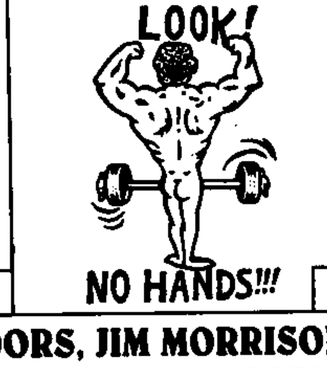

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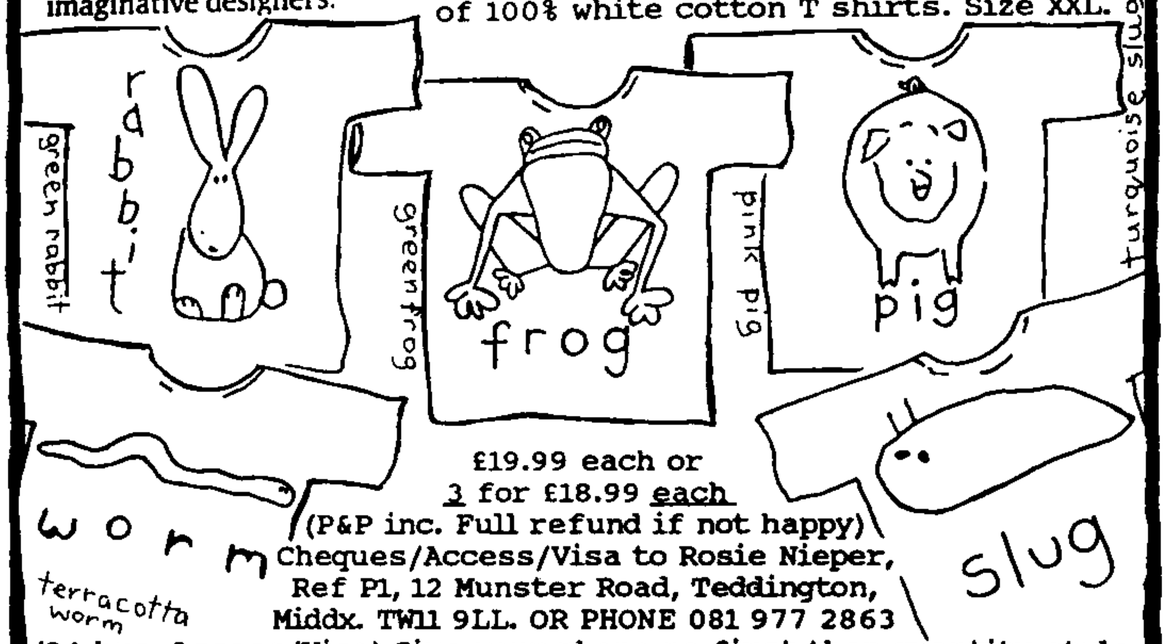

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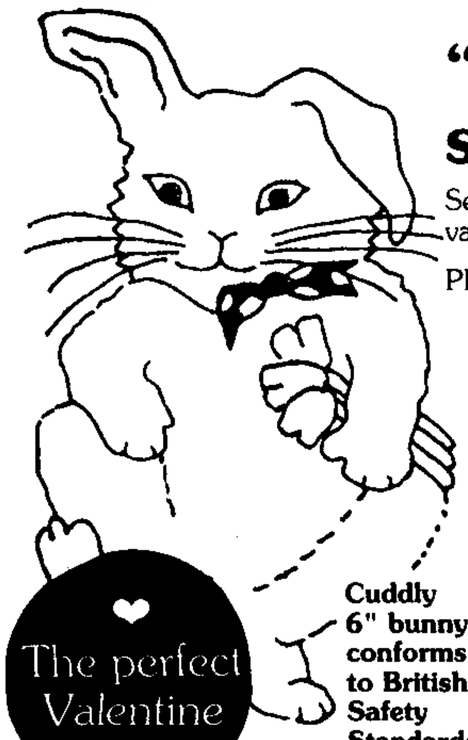

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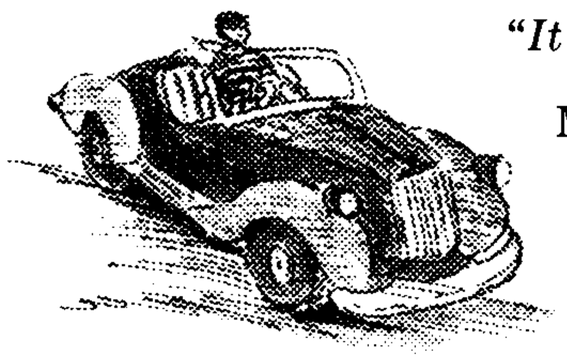
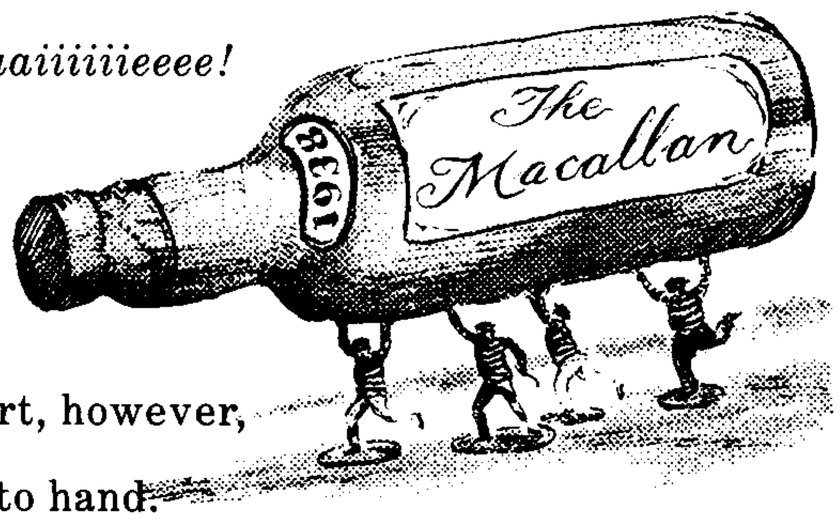


"It tore at my guts," said MR SPELLACY of Paisley, when thieves stole his priceless collection of miniature automobiles.

But even worse was the discovery that the felons had made off with a bottle of 1938 The Macallan Malt Whisky valued currently at well over £1,000.

Aaaiiiiieeee!



Comfort, however, was to hand.

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Gnome

WITH THE inauguration of a new President of the United States, the climbdown of the British Government over its energy policy, the continued outbreaks of fighting in the former Yugoslavia, and the uncertainty over the future of Prince Charles, there is one question of overriding importance to be answered. What is Lord Gnome's christian name?

This extraordinary mystery has dominated both newspapers and television programmes for weeks. The nation is clearly reaching fever pitch in its desire for a solution.

Old videos are being replayed, old press cuttings are being dug up and my office is swamped by requests for this vital information by desperate fans. Only the letter E. from an old passport of mine gives any clue to the answer.

Is it Erasmus Gnome, as so many seem to think? Or is it Ebenezer Gnome, as Ms Rita Chevrolet hinted? Or is it Ethel? Or Ecstasy? Or Eldorado?

It is high time to put an end to this speculation. I can at last reveal that the E. stands for Extraordinary Waste of Time (surely 'Ernest'?, E.S.).

E. Strobes (Emanuel),
pp. Lord Gnome,
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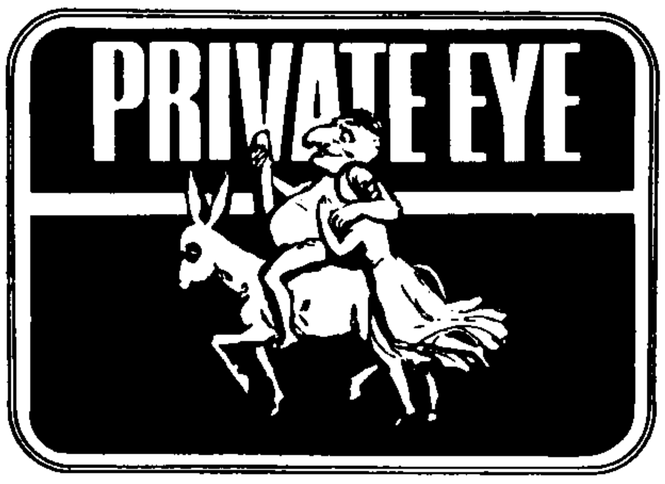


COLOUR SECTION

THE FANTASTIC enthusiasm in the City media for the appointment of Eddie George as governor of the Bank of England heralds the imminent privatisation of this last bastion of government control over banking.

Newspapers and television were tactful enough hardly to mention BCCI, the biggest bank fraud in history, which happened mainly in Britain under the supervision of the Bank of England. Robin Leigh-Pemberton, the governor of the bank and friend of the Thatchers, took most of the flak directed at the bank by the Bingham report and the even more devastating inquiry by Senator Kerry in the United States. But Sir Robin decided the buck stopped somewhere else, and didn't resign. Neither did Eddie George, his deputy, who was nominally in charge of banking supervision.

The Bingham report traces disquiet inside the Bank of England about BCCI right back to 1982 when an official in the banking supervision department, Brian Gent, started to question the competence of Luxembourg to supervise such a quickly-growing and suspicious bank as BCCI, and suggested tough measures to bring it more strictly under British control.

Gent incurred the fury of Agha Hassan Abedi, the bank's founder and chief crook, who denounced all who agreed with Gent with such ferocity that the bank took fright and held off. Gent continued his campaign for at least five years, when at last he started to make an impact on his superiors.

At a meeting in September 1987, Bingham records, deputy governor Eddie George indicated some agreement with Gent. The matter was pushed off till October, when George wasn't at the board meeting. In the end, Gent's campaign failed, in spite of the apparent support of so senior a figure as Mr George, the deputy governor.

The dreadful story of dither and delay continued until BCCI was finally closed down in 1991 with about a million depositors, many of them in Britain, losing their money. For all of this, George was every bit as responsible as Leigh-Pemberton — and just as happy not to take the consequences.

DR PAUL KNAPMANN, the cocky coroner for Westminster who dealt with deaths arising from the Marchioness pleasure boat disaster in 1989, got a nasty rebuff in the high court on 18 January.

After a whole day's hearing, Mr Justice Popplewell sent to the divisional court a plea for a rerun of the inquest into the death of one of the passengers, Sean Lockwood-Croft. The application — from the man's mother, Margaret Lockwood-Croft, who was on legal aid — was based on the suggestion that Dr Knapmann was biased.

This unusual claim was based on the way Dr Knapmann and his deputy dealt with the Marchioness deaths, and in particular on his extraordinary decision to cut the hands off several of the victims without consulting or informing their next of kin.

In particular, Mrs Lockwood-Croft claimed that as soon as she complained to the press, in this case the *Mail on Sunday*, about the amputation of her son's hands, the coroner called a press conference at which (again without permission) he showed journalists the gruesome pictures of the drowned victims.

He then, Mrs Lockwood-Smith claimed, said that she was "unhinged" by the death of her son. At first the coroner's lawyers seemed to deny that he had ever used the word "unhinged" — but this became difficult to sustain when the notebooks of two reporters at the conference were produced to the court. The word "unhinged" appeared quite clearly in them among the coroner's remarks. There then followed a long discussion on the meaning of the word "unhinged", which resulted in the judge finding clearly for the plaintiff.

When the case reaches the divisional court, evidence about the alleged necessity of cutting off dead peoples' hands will be heard in full.

MORE MATERIAL for Lord Justice Scott and his inquiry into Britain's arming of Saddam Hussein.

In a little-publicised written parliamentary answer, the prime minister gave some hitherto undisclosed figures about the export of machine tools from Britain and three other big exporting countries to Iraq in the years from 1987.

His answer must be read in the light of the theory that, after 1988, the British machine tool industry took the lead in equipping the Iraqi armed forces — and that all other countries were left way behind.

In 1987, Britain exported $5.5m worth of machine tools to Iraq, only slightly more than Italy. From then on, the figures went through the roof. In millions of dollars, the value of exports of machine tools to Iraq were as follows:

1988: Britain, 63,076; France, 10,983; Italy, 22.267; USA, 168. 1989: Britain, 24,327; France, 4,692; Italy, 14,427; USA, 11,252. In other words, in the two years when Saddam Hussein was heralded throughout the business world as a "bastion against Communism" Britain sold him more machine tools (almost all of which were used to make arms) than France, Italy and the US put together.

MORE NEWS of the strange decision to award an OBE to Angela Yeoman, the prominent Somerset Tory and quarry-lover whose "services to the environment" were recognised in the new year's honours list.

As readers of the last *Eye* will recall, Mrs Yeoman owns Britain's largest private quarrying company, Foster Yeoman, whose super-quarries greatly enhance our landscape. Readers may not know, however, that only last summer the company was successfully prosecuted and fined for its "services *against* the environment".

At Crawley magistrates' court, Foster Yeoman pleaded guilty to operating its roadstone coating plant at Gatwick Road, Crawley, without a certificate of registration, in breach of various health, safety and anti-pollution regulations. The firm was fined £3,000 and ordered to pay £2,000 costs.

"The pit's fine, but the Government's caved in!"

STREET of SHAME

DEE "Noleen" Nolan, the Australian interior design expert who edits *YOU Magazine*, has been mortified by the universally contemptuous reaction of fellow professionals to her relaunched product, now vying with Simon "Pussy" Kelner's *Observer Magazine* for worst colour supplement status.

YOU's new art director, Alex Evans, who was with Noleen at the failed Murdoch Magazines title *Metropolitan Home*, declared that the new *YOU* would be a "classy classless magazine", and in order to maintain absolute secrecy about this exciting departure Noleen spent a fortune producing three complete issues in the old *YOU* style with no intention of publishing them. Not even her own staff knew of the re-design, which went on in a locked room with a skeleton team of trusted toadies.

One indication of Noleen's purchase on contemporary culture came in a recent features meeting when commissioning editors suggested profiles on Anthony Burgess and film director Bernardo Bertolucci. There was a flicker of hope when Noleen said she had "perhaps heard of Bertolucci", asking: "Isn't he something to do with Italian ice cream?" "You know... *The Last Emperor*", volunteered features editor Sean Macaulay helpfully. "Emperor of what?" was Noleen's retort.

A NEW CASH crisis has hit the *Observer*. Hacks at the drooping organ were told last week that henceforth they can claim no more than £75 a month in expenses.

And for why? The culprit is Simon "Pussy Man" Kelner, who was hired by Donald "Pixie" Trelford last year to revamp the *Observer* magazine.

During the first two and a half months of Kelner's editorship, it has now been discovered, the magazine overspent its budget by a lip-smacking £100,000 and earned £300,000 less in advertising revenue than had been projected. The £100,000 overspend went on harebrained schemes such as Martin Amis's trip to America, where he failed to interview Madonna, and a project whereby five photographers were hired for a week to do nothing but take pictures of shopping centres.

At an emergency meeting of heads of department to discuss this £400,000 shortfall, someone suggested the mag could abandon its "perfect binding" (ie gluing the pages to a spine) and revert to the old-fashioned and more pleasing method of holding it together with a staple. Although Trelford admitted this would save £300,000 a year, he insisted it was out of the question. "Simon says it would look like a climbdown," he explained feebly.

Trelford and Kelner seem unaffected by the new limit on expenses. Last Friday they enjoyed a five-hour, multi-bottle lunch at Marco-Pierre White's ruinously expensive restaurant Harvey's, where, after congratulating each other on the high standard of the newspaper and its magazine, they fell to discussing who should be axed in the next staff purge, scheduled for March.

When the pair returned to the office at about 5.30pm, both blotto, Kelner lurched round the newsroom announcing loudly that arts editor Gillian Widdicombe (wife of Jeremy Isaacs and old friend of the Duke of Edinburgh) and literary editor Michael Ratcliffe were to be fired — presumably to save enough costs to keep the Pixie and the Pussy Man in the style to which they are accustomed.

This incautious talk was drawn to the attention of father-of-the-chapel Jonathan Wilson, who protested to Trelford that this was not the way to conduct redundancy negotiations — and pointed out that the editor had previously promised that there would be no more sackings. Trelford duly sent for Kelner to warn him that discretion was the ticket to the gravy train.

The Pixie, meanwhile, has been rubbing his little hands together in glee over the discomfiture of senior British Airways executives following their humiliation by Virgin Airlines. Journeying to New York recently at Tiny Rowland's expense (to visit, among others, his twentysomething former paramour, Georgia de Chambertin), "Pixie" sought an upgrade in keeping with his standing — to first class from business class. Unfortunately, no upgrade was forthcoming.

BRIAN TETLEY, a 58-year-old *Daily Sport* hack who has cancer, asked for a fortnight's holiday last month so he could visit his wife's family in Africa over Christmas.

Since he had quite recently undergone major surgery, it seemed a reasonable request. But the *Sport*'s editor, charmless Peter Grimsditch, warned him: "If you take two weeks off, I'll sack you." Deciding there were some things in life more important than a job on the *Daily Sport*, Tetley went anyway.

His wife, Mary, who is Kenyan, was horrified when she heard of Grimsditch's threat. She consulted the witch-doctor in her village of Uthiru, near Nairobi. After throwing his magic bones, the spell-caster placed a curse upon Grimsditch.

On his return from holiday after Christmas, Tetley found a letter from Grimsditch, dated 14 December, duly dismissing him. He disconsolately telephoned a colleague — who informed him that the very day after writing the letter, on 15 December, Grimsditch himself had been suddenly sacked.

NO NAIROBI witch-doctor has yet been instructed in the matter of David "Rommel" Montgomery, who has sacked dozens more *Oberleutnants* and *Feldwebels* in his Afrika Corps this month.

In a now-familiar ritual, three members of the five-man *Sunday Mirror* team in Manchester were summoned to the city's Charterhouse Hotel to meet executives from the London office who wanted to discuss "a big story".

The Charterhouse in Manchester comes cheaper than Claridges in London, where "Rommel" fired *Daily Mirror* editor Richard Stott after inviting him to a Sunday breakfast to discuss a matter of world importance. But not much cheaper. News editor John McShane, sports editor Bob Harris and executive Colin Harrow had all travelled up from London and installed themselves in suites for the occasion. Harris later announced that he would be returning to London by taxi. No doubt the banks who are keeping the *Mirror* afloat think it is money well spent.

The three victims, suspecting nothing, arrived at the hotel and were directed upstairs by a waiter. Each was then curtly informed of his dismissal and shown a pay-off cheque which would only be handed over if they all accepted their redundancy terms in writing there and then.

Details about further payments have been particularly difficult to obtain since "Rommel" last week sacked many of the *Mirror*'s cashiers.

MILD senile dementia, a condition well-known to readers of the *Daily Express*, appears to be afflicting those who write for the paper, too.

At the beginning of January the Opinion column, huffing and puffing about lawless Britain, reminded readers that the rag had "long decried the tendency of the police to lavish more resources fighting the motorist than thugs. It is a matter of priorities."

Just three days later the leader writer's own priorities had changed completely, as the same editorial was now calling for the roads to be "swept clean of lethal thugs".

In all its excitement about murder, assault and dangerous driving, the paper forgot to mention that Conservative MP Robert Atkins, now the Ulster minister but also a former roads supremo, had been banned from driving after doing more than 70mph in a 30mph area.

THE ONLY TWO mainstream newspapers to run the Camillagate transcript were both Mirror Group publications — the *People* and the *Sunday Mirror*.

It is, of course, pure coincidence that the Mirror Group's boss these days is former *News of the Screws* sleazebag David "Rommel" Montgomery. The editors of the two Sunday papers, Bridget Rowe and Colin Myler, insist that each of them decided "independently" to publish the Tampax tape and that Rommel put them under no pressure to do so.

Their official justification for publishing the transcript — that the press must not be gagged — has caused much amusement at Holborn Circus. The *Sunday Mirror* had no compunction about "gagging" one of its own sub-editors two weeks ago (as reported in the last *Eye*); and former *Mirror* editor Richard Stott and *People* editor Bill Hagerty also had to sign vows of silence in order to get their pay-off cheques last month.

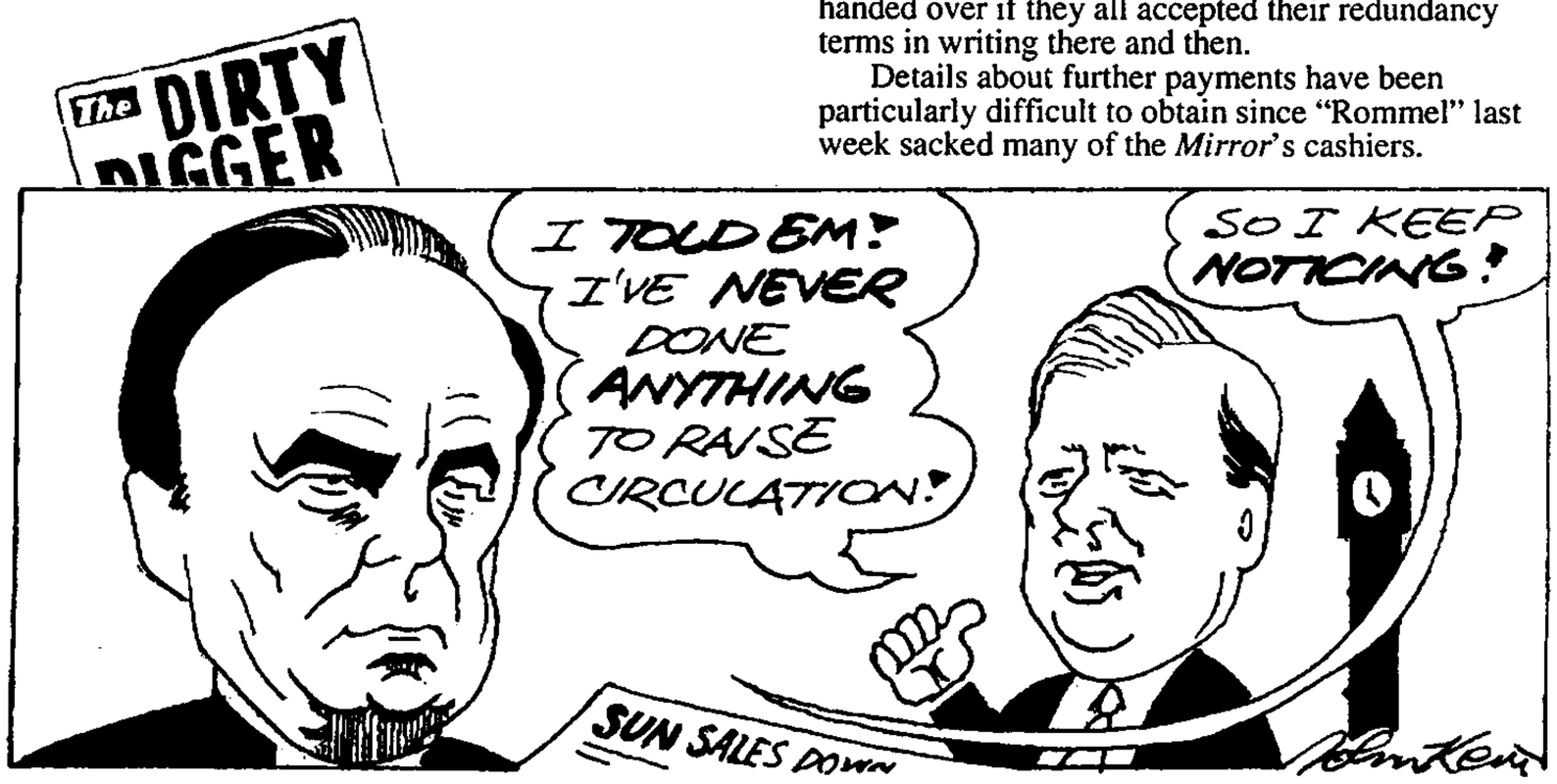
THE *Indescribablyboring* magazine has been rudely introduced to the ways of Wapping by its new editor, John Walsh, former literary editor at the *Sunset Times*.

In his first week Walsh bounced over to the picture desk and asked the picture editor to find some photographs of couples touching each other up in public. The editor, whose taste is more for austere, grainy studies of life in east European tenements, was horrified but put the request down to Walsh's inexperience.

More was to come. Walsh then dispensed with the services of Bruce Bernard, author of *Vincent by Himself*, who was responsible for a little monograph on an artist's work at the rear of the magazine each week. Walsh announced that instead he was to introduce a lively rear section based on Rear View in the defunct *Sunday Correspondent* magazine.

When asked what sort of stories it would carry, Walsh suggested a regular feature which described where well-known people bought items associated with their personalities. What sort of items had he in mind? "Well," said Walsh with an idiotic glint in his eye, "the shop where Nigella Lawson buys her bras."

Although high-minded Andreas Whittam Strobes is already said to be regretting allowing himself to be persuaded by Matthew Symonds that Walsh was the man for the job, he cannot protest that these downmarket ideas are a surprise. Walsh mentioned the bra feature in his proposal last year.



"A CONSTANT refrain from has-been and never-were journalists is that investigative journalism is dead. Piffle!" So spluttered the *Sunset Times* last week.

On the front page of the same issue, the headline TOKYO TRACK SCANDAL ROCKS TOP ATHLETES trumpeted an allegedly "exclusive" story by athletics correspondent Cliff Temple.

The piece revealed that the track on which the present world records for the long jump and the 100 metres were set, at the 1991 world championships in Tokyo, had an unusually hard surface "giving an advantage to sprinters and long-jumpers". The records were therefore suspect. Temple added that the same surface had hampered distance runners, whose legs ached from the extra jolting.

All very true — but hardly new: the entire story, written by Andy Coghlan, was first published in *New Scientist* magazine on 1 August 1992. It has taken the *Sunset Times* a mere six months to catch up — and claim the story as its own "exclusive".

THE REMOVAL of Sir Leon Brittan from the job of competition commissioner in Brussels is helping the government shuffle towards a temporary solution to the coal crisis.

While his replacement, Karel van Miert, is a socialist who seems likely to support subsidies for the British coal industry, Sir Leon would have been prepared to insist on Thatcherite principles of letting the market rule — especially if it embarrassed Michael Heseltine. (Brittan left Thatcher's government with Heseltine as a result of the Westland helicopter uproar.)

The government's ploy now will be to continue the shutdown of the coal industry — but more gradually. That would have been its original plan, *but the man* who enjoyed, and still enjoys, a reputation as the great tactician advised differently. Lord Wakeham, former energy secretary, thought it would be best to inflict the unpleasant measures early in this parliament so they would be forgotten before the next election. Public uproar showed how wrong he was. His talent, however, survives: witness the way he has kept his head down while others have been blaming everyone in sight.

The plan to shut down all but 12-14 pits will remain as British Coal's policy as long as the government is committed to privatising the industry. The Rothschild survey said the way to sell the industry was to cut it back to the handful of most-profitable pits. That is what British Coal managers still want because they have seen the vast salaries paid to bosses in privatised industries.

Meanwhile, the option remains for the government to cut (or threaten to cut) imports of French nuclear-generated electricity, and also to phase out our own nuclear levy on electricity bills if Brussels should prove tetchy over coal subsidies.

HEALTH BUFFS are growing more and more confused about the government's intentions towards the Tomlinson report on London's health service.

Just before Christmas, a series of orchestrated leaks from the department of health led to journalists writing stories saying that Virginia Bottomley would shut all the hospitals named for closure by Tomlinson, including Barts.

Alas for Virginia, on 17 January the Sunday newspapers, in response to Downing Street and cabinet office leaks at a lobby meeting with journalists, carried stories that John Major, fearful of the political consequences of closure, wanted Barts to stay open. Beside herself with rage, Bottomley immediately went on the radio to denounce the leaks.

Most Tory MPs are relieved that the government may lay off Barts because they believe it is one cock-up too many. However, a small number of Tory MPs, too dim to anticipate that the government might back off, have written to their constituents supporting Tomlinson and Bottomley.

Among these Tory MPs are Kenneth Clarke, James F Pawsey, Vivian W H Bendall, John Whittingdale and David Congdon.

He who would be prime minister, the Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC, should have known better. A former secretary of state for health himself, he astonished his constituent Mrs Winfindale when he wrote to her on 28 December that Barts was part of "a collection of London hospitals which are rather short of patients". Clarke is blissfully unaware that Barts is treating more out-patients and more day-surgery patients than ever before. Its average bed occupancy rate of 96 percent went over 100 percent over the Christmas period with patients lying on trolleys in corridors.

Clarke's letter also referred to "a set of rather elderly buildings in a part of London which has a low population". The ignorant Clarke seems unaware that within a two-mile radius of Barts is a night time population of 200,000 and a day time population of 500,000. The "rather elderly buildings" contain the most advanced operating theatre complex in western Europe (opened on 21 January) and the best medical research complex in Britain at Charterhouse Square.

Still, no one expects Clarke to be bothered with the facts. He is, after all, the one who said he'd never read the Maastricht treaty but still supported it wholeheartedly.

BR CHAIRMAN Sir Robert Reid can already feel the hot breath of his successor on his neck: he is BR's new deputy chairman, Robert "Gillette" Horton, a career oilman who was briefly chairman of British Petroleum until he was chucked out by his fellow directors in 1991.

Horton, as cosy as a razor blade, was the government's idea of a Christmas present for backsliding Sir Bob, who has lost faith in privatisation and is now totally immune to the new Whitehall disease of franchise mania. Horton's two qualifications for being made Reid's deputy were that he was looking for a job and that he is heavily infected with franchise mania.

The only chairman of BP to have left without a knighthood, Horton has another chance to win his spurs by taking over from Sir Bob when the government finally decides to push him out. Few tears were shed when Horton got the heave-ho from BP; and, understandably, his arrival at BR has been greeted with loud wailing and gnashing of teeth, particularly in the BR politbureau run by ex-deputy secretary John "Mitterrand" Palmer, the former rail boss at the transport department.

Palmer has gone so totally native that he is suspected of spending his weekends removing leaves from railway tracks. It is Palmer who has been leading (from behind) resistance against the government's insane privatisation policy. The search is now on for a suitable tree to shoot him against.

Horton is not the only private sector reject to have been foisted on BR. Ten years ago Sir Richard Cave, who had an equally disastrous career as chairman of Thorn-EMI, was made deputy chairman of BR, but died before driving Sir Bob's predecessor completely mad. Horton, who is younger and more durable, stands a better chance of unhinging, if not unseating, the present chairman, but at least he won't give him franchise mania.

NO DOUBT when John Gummer is shuffled out of the ministry of agriculture — and for the sake of Britain's landscape it should be soon — there will be a big fat directorship waiting for him in the agrochemical industry.

The pollution and subsidies minister continues to hype agricultural set-aside as a gain for the environment — but his ludicrous weed subsidy is really nothing more than a sop to the pesticide industry.

While pocketing the subsidy on land taken out of production, gleeful farmers proceed to drench their remaining acres in even more chemicals. Naturally, the delighted pesticide barons are laughing all the way to the bank — and actively urging farmers to get in on the scam.

An advertisement from the multinational Hydro Fertilisers, leading manufacturer of the nitrates that contaminate half Britain's water supplies, brazenly spells it out: when you've set aside 15 per cent of your land, farmers are told, it's vital to maximum returns on the other 85 per cent. So the message is: go and pollute another dozen or so rivers.

IT LOOKS as if Tim Eggar, the normally pugnacious energy minister, is going to cave in to ICI and its demand for subsidised electricity at its chlorine plant at Runcorn, on the Mersey.

The chemical giant and polluter has threatened to close the plant and sack 7,000 workers if it doesn't get what it wants, and it seems Eggar will yield to the threat — and make other electricity consumers pay extra to help ICI.

ICI is the company that started the "dash for gas" by building the world's biggest gas-fired turbine at its plant on Teesside. It went into partnership with the US gas company Enron in 1990 to put up a 1,725 megawatt combined cycle gas turbine, with 275 MW of the "cheap electricity" allocated to ICI and the rest for sale to the grid — at the exorbitant price about which it is now complaining.

So why doesn't it build itself a power plant at Runcorn? Its spokesman said it was a chemical company and was concentrating on core business; and, anyway, it would take years. That wasn't what ICI said when it was boasting how quickly a gas station could be built. Meanwhile the "clean gas" station at Teesside will deposit four million tons of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere every year. Eggar should tell ICI to build itself an environmentally-acceptable generator or shut up.

O·B·N

Dear Editor: We are very sad to read the current adverse press regarding British Airways.

We feel this is a time when Lord King, Sir Colin Marshall and all the Executive and Non-executive Directors of the company strongly need our support.

We must not forget the tremendous results that have been achieved over the past decade. We therefore wholeheartedly offer them our support for the present and the future. — **Carl Gissing, Dympna Rowe, William Burton, Gary Gray, Mike Potter, Jenny Owen, June Holborn, Roger Vince, Gayna Fitzgerald, Sue Lawrence, Heathrow.**

Letter in BA NEWS

In her black one-piece bathing suit, she runs through the foam, her magnificent muscles lightly tanned, her children happily gambolling by her side. This is what we all wanted to read this week and the story, which redounded to her credit, of how she managed to fool both the Palace stuffpots and the dreary old Calcutt committee by her denial of any involvement with silly little Morton's book. Another triumph for Lady Di! Three cheers for Her Royal Highness.

A.N. WILSON
Evening Standard

Submitted by Anon, Robert Keys.

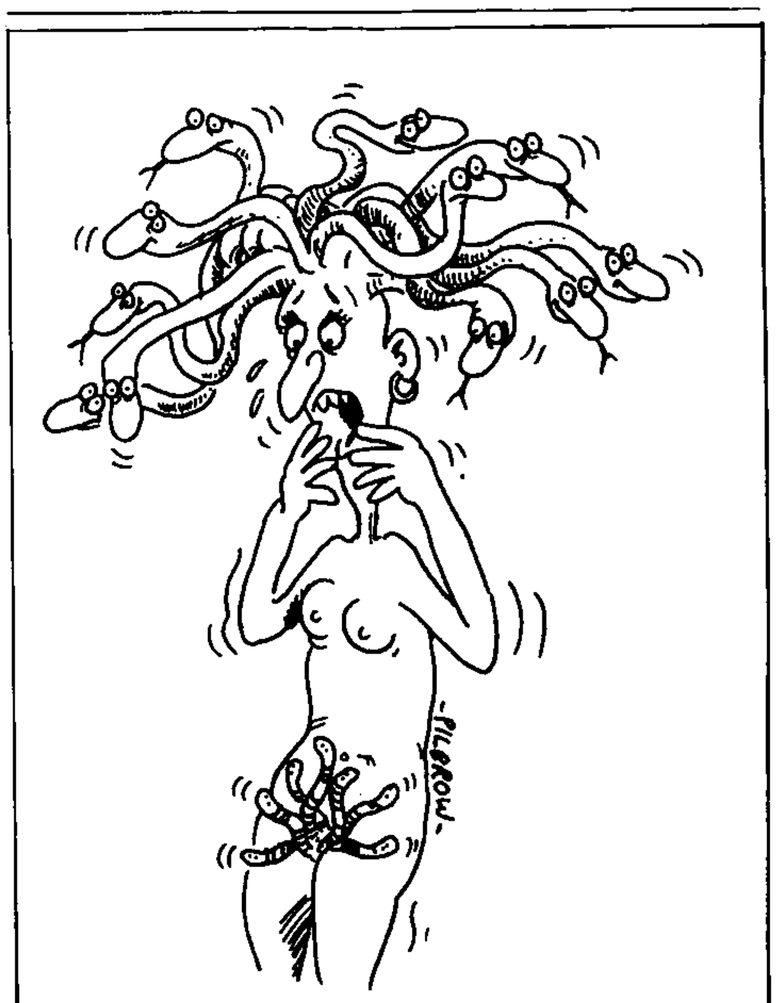
£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

NO WONDER bright sparks at the Labour party HQ in Walworth Road want to "Clintonise" the party. Even before he was inaugurated Bill Clinton had done a U-turn on most of his campaign promises.

The biggest upset for deluded American liberals was when he announced that he would *reinforce* the US coastguard to keep Haitian refugees from leaving their tragic homeland. During his campaign he had declared this to be illegal and pledged to stop it. But will the extra coastguards keeping people in also have instructions to stop sanctions-busting oil tankers from going to Haiti? Don't bank on it.

Clinton has also U-turned on pledges to invest $20 billion in infrastructure, ostensibly because things are worse than he thought during his campaign. Strangely, he fought his campaign on the recession and economy; and within two days of being elected federal statistics were announced showing that the economy had been growing for six months and the recession was officially over.

'Backbiter'



MEDUSA HITS PUBERTY

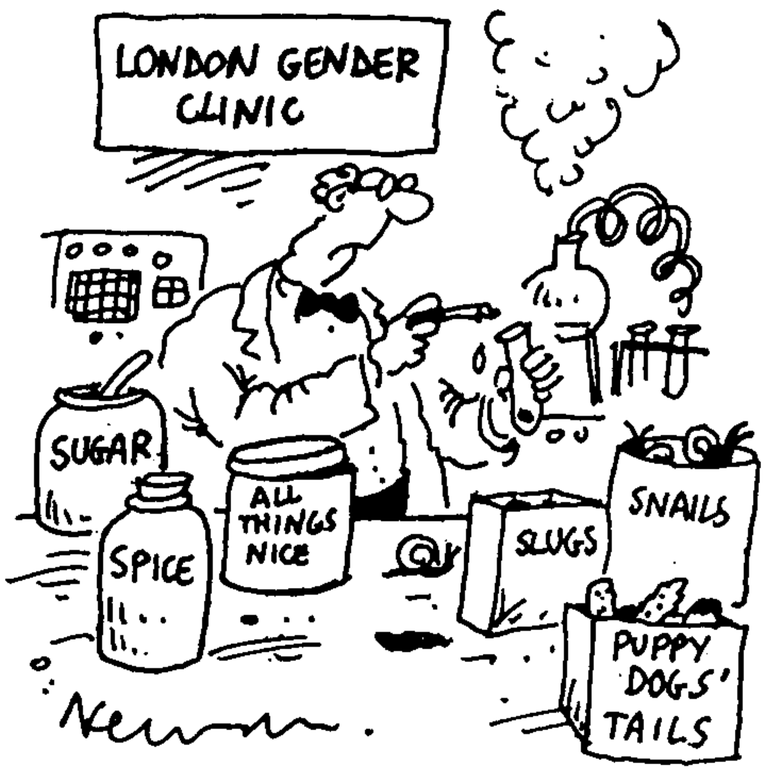
Grovel

A CRUCIAL piece of evidence used by Richard Branson to secure his libel victory over British Airways was a conversation between BA's PR consultant Brian Basham and *Today* hack Chris Hutchins.

A tape of this meeting, which had been secretly recorded by Hutchins, was used by Branson as proof that Basham was trying to "smear" him by drawing attention to his ownership of Heaven, the gay night-club.

What makes Hutchins's betrayal of Basham rather surprising is that Basham's wife, Eileen Wise, used to be Hutchins's deputy on his "Confidential" diary column in *Today*.

While she worked with Hutchins, Wise went to great trouble to help him cure his cocaine habit, booking him into drug clinics and holding the fort in his absence. Hutchins then repaid her kindness by bugging and shopping her husband. It is safe to surmise she will not be doing the roguish hack any more favours.



I HAVE BEEN reading a most interesting piece about the first Lord Beaverbrook in the Canadian magazine *Saturday Night*.

"The newspaper industry in London," it begins, "has long attracted proprietors of immense ego." The article, which describes Beaverbrook's treatment of his first wife as "pretty shabby", argues that his relationships with "exotic women" were "impressive testimony to the magnetism of his personality and to his money and position, since he was not physically prepossessing". The Beaver's political judgment, meanwhile, was "catastrophically poor... His campaign against the European Common Market in the fifties and early sixties was based on ludicrously outdated notions of Britain's status in the world."

The author of this article is one Conrad Black.

This cannot, surely, be the Conrad Black whose own *Sunday Telegraph* **has recently been conducting a vigorous campaign against the Common Market? The same man who married gorgeous, pouting Barbara Amiel last year, after parting from his first wife? And whose egotism is such that he fills his newspapers with articles and letters by himself, believing that his readers will wish to know his views on mini-skirts and other important topics?**

Sadly, it is the very same.

Pseuds Corner

In Claude Chabrol's *Le Boucher*, **the titular character pours wine into the end of his soup. An ignorant film critic (Alexander Walker) thought it was a way of showing the butcher's grossness. It wasn't. It was a joke. Of what sort?**

(Answer) This is an instance of auto-patronymic allusion. In the part of the Dordogne where Chabrol comes from, and where he set and filmed *Le Boucher*, the practice of finishing off soup with wine is called *faire chabrot* or *faire chabrol*.

JONATHAN MEADE'S FOOD QUIZ
Times Saturday Review

In that remote provincial museum in Darmstadt, I could not help remembering how Beuys chose to present himself to the flashy capital of the art world — New York. He averted his eyes the moment he arrived at Kennedy Airport in 1974. Friends wrapped him up in felt. A wailing ambulance then transported him to the René Block art gallery in SoHo.

Instead of sipping wine with collectors, Beuys spent several days in a room with a coyote. He had a felt blanket, a flashlight, and a cane, which he used as a kind of shepherd's staff. He also laid out copies of *The Wall Street Journal*, which the coyote seemed to enjoy padding over. Sometimes, before the taped roar of a turbine interrupted them, he would strike a triangle — making a musical, spiritual sound.

MARK STEVENS
Vanity Fair

Simplifying grossly, an acteme is a single narrative unit or chunk in a (not necessarily) fictional discourse, a unit generated by language but subsequently capable of resonating in the reader's mind in a free-floating, extra-linguistic form. And if I revive the concept here, just a week after the brouhaha surrounding the presentation of the 20 Best Young Novelists of the 1990s, it's because it increasingly seems to me that what is wrong with contemporary British fiction is its chronic shortage of memorable and enduring actemes.

GILBERT ADAIR
Sunday Times

Ms [Anna] Wintour has clout in New York City; how she feels about her lunch guests is apparently indicated by whether or not she removes her sunglasses while eating her hamburger (no bun)...

...That there are too few "good tables" is to the Royalton's profit; call it supply and demand. Recently Mr McNally said: "We have too many VIPs. We have more important people than we have important chairs."

REGGIE NADELSON
Independent

£10 paid for entries

● IT WAS no surprise that the Daily Express and Daily Star ignored the industrial tribunal at which a former Harrods sales assistant told how he was threatened with "an appearance in daddy's paper" by the Hon. Judith Stevens, 28-year-old daughter of Lord Stevens of Ludgate, proprietor of both titles. But why should the Telegraph avoid such a juicy tale?

Editor Max "Hitler" Hastings, I gather, was furious when his proprietor, Conrad Black, said he didn't want to see a report of the tribunal in the Torygraph. How, reasoned Hitler, could the press object to a privacy law if proprietors censor material about their chums, even when the material is in the public domain? For once Hitler has a point, I feel.

FAME can open many doors — even for ungracious celebrities like Clive James, the TV "personality" and autocue-reader.

Jaws, who has a home not a million miles from the Barbican underground station in London, was approaching his block when a fellow resident, some yards in front, kindly held the door open for him.

Strangely Jaws was not impressed by this gesture and tore the fellow off a strip. "You know you're not supposed to let any unidentified people into the building," he barked. "You don't know if I am a robber." The shocked resident knew Clive James only too well: "You're too old, too fat and too bald to be a robber," he replied quickly.

Another of my readers was equally unimpressed by the Australian's off-screen behaviour at a branch of Sainsbury's. When Jaws was approached by a fellow shopper — who asked innocently: "Are you Clive James?" — the verbose one's reply was uncharacteristically succinct. "Fuck off," he replied wittily.

"I've been selected for the English cricket team"

ANOTHER greedy firm of lawyers is challenging hard for the *Eye*'s coveted Peter Carter-Fuck Award for Overcharging.

Herbert Smith & Co, which represented Esther Rantzen in her successful libel action against *The People*, has had its costs taxed by the Mirror Group's lawyers. The taxation court decided to reduce Herbert Smith's profit costs by roughly £170,000 — from £288,254.88 to £121,490.20. Counsel's costs were also taxed downwards.

The Herbert Smith partner responsible for the litigation, David Natali, charged at a rate of £150 an hour, with a "care and attention" uplift of 175 per cent. His firm claimed to have put in 773 hours on the case, but could only account for 331 by its own assessment. The taxation master decided the firm had only worked for 248 hours.

The BBC will have to make up the difference, and since the Mirror Group is appealing against the award of damages it is likely poor Enid Rancid will not see a penny of damages.

● SLEEPLESS with worry about what Sir David Calcutt will allow me to publish in future, I turn for solace to a book called The Press Council, which offers advice on "the ethical standards of the British press, standards which are vital if the press is to command the confidence of the British public."

Alas, my own confidence is rather shaken when I notice that the author of this great work is "H. Phillip Levy, barrister" — the randy old goat who used to spend his afternoons in hotel rooms with a married woman, Ms Marje Proops.

Still, according to Marje's recent revelations, Mr Levy's standards of conduct — in the bedroom, at least — were very high indeed.

Pip Pip!

NOOKS and CORNERS

ST HELEN BISHOPSGATE

The Great Architect of the Universe Arrives!

IN THE WEEKS before Christmas, visitors to that handclapping evangelical hothouse in the City of London, St Helen's Bishopsgate, could pick up a leaflet about a series of lectures by the rector, Prebendary "Dick" Lucas, entitled THE GREAT ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE ARRIVES!

Readers might be forgiven for thinking this encomium referred to the church's pet architect, God's Own, Mr Quinlan Terry, who once maintained that the "easy lookin' " Classicism he *practises* so woodenly was divinely inspired. And Mr Terry has much to do at St Helen's, for the IRA assisted God's work by blowing out the east windows and damaging the roof with the big bomb left outside the Baltic Exchange last year, providing the opportunity for a radical "rehabilitation" of the interior.

Mr Terry is not the obvious choice as architect to deal with one of the few ancient City churches to survive the Great Fire and one of the most important medieval buildings in London, for he cares little for Popish Gothic and, when he boldly accepted the pennies of the Scarlet Woman of Rome to enlarge the Gothic Revival pile which is Brentford Cathedral, he tacked on lots and lots of round arches.

But God's Own Architect is a fundamentalist low churchman and, besides, his daughter is married to the curate, so it was providential to be able to wheel in this big name who will expunge all fittings redolent of hateful Laudianism and Tractarianism and make the building look as if it has just been exorcised by the Puritans.

St Helen's is a lovely building. It has parallel naves, separated by a 14th century arcade, with a fine chancel enclosed by screens created in the south nave in the 1890s by J.L. Pearson, the architect of Truro Cathedral. This helps make the interior seem reminiscent of an East Anglian late medieval church. Not that the building is all Gothic: it is full of wonderful tombs and there is a celebrated "Artisan Mannerist" 17th century door, so it seems reasonable that Mr Terry proposes a west gallery on Doric columns. But much more is planned.

The damaged 19th century tracery in the east window of the "Nuns' Quire" is to be replaced by a feeble 18th century arrangement of lancets, while the dramatic changes in floor level are all to be unified (wheelchair access) and the screens are to be taken away and placed elsewhere, leaving the interior as a whitewashed non-liturgical auditorium for slap-clappy worship. As for the reredos, that bit of crypto-Popery will be hidden out of sight.

To counter the deep reservations of the Victorian Society and English Heritage, Mr Terry argues that the screen and reredos are not really by Pearson (so what: they are fine things) and makes great play with the argument that, as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) opposed Pearson's work in the 1890s, it would be wrong to defend it now. This ignores the real SPAB philosophy, well expressed by Morris's disciple Lethaby when attacking Pearson's "restoration" of Westminster Abbey: "Now it is done don't alter it; I would not meddle with even the restorations of a restorer." As for the window tracery, Mr Terry argues that an 18th century pattern is quite as good as a 19th century one: true, but why ignore Vertue's print of what the original tracery was like?

I have some sympathy with the argument that in churches like St Helen's each generation has left its mark and that such buildings must change and adapt. But while Mr Terry reasonably proposes to add something of the era of George Carey, he also wants to take a great deal away — for purely dogmatic, or, rather, bigoted reasons.

What matters is that St Helen's is *beautiful*. John Betjeman wrote how, "Inside, one steps down into a charming muddled effect... There is a strong atmosphere of pre-Fire London." Not any more, if God's Own Architect has his way. Instead we shall have a prissy vision of a church as it might have looked in his favourite 18th century.

But the London diocesan advisory board loves it. After all, as St Helen's is packed to the doors with "evos", the parish brings in lots and lots of money to the diocese. And, besides, Q. Terry is a fashionable architect admired by HRH the Prince of Wales, so he must be allowed to do what he wants. God's Will, after all.

ANOTHER fashionable architect who is beyond criticism is Sir Norman Foster. Quin and Norm may work in rather different styles, but they are united by blinkered arrogance.

Foster is quite happy to respond to Paul Hamlyn's invitation to enlarge his house in Chelsea Old Church Street, changing and compromising the integrity of the original design of 1935. Yet this house was designed by Erich Mendelsohn, one of the few really great architects of the 20th century, whose handful of buildings over here are among the finest monuments of the Modern Movement in Britain.

You might suppose that superstar Norman, who affects to care about the history of Modernism and who is, after all, not exactly short of a bob or two, might hesitate before gratuitously tampering with so rare and special a building. But no: he is confident he can improve on the original.

As for me, I fear I think that Mendelsohn was a rather better architect than Norman Foster, just as the work of Quinlan Terry seems considerably less interesting than that of J.L. Pearson — or, for that matter, Palladio. But that, I know, is an unfashionable opinion.

'Piloti'

HUNT NEWS

A GROUP of hunt supporters have been acquitted of major charges following a trial at Portsmouth crown court.

The charges arose from an incident on 16 March 1991 which was reported in the *Eye*. That day the Hursley Hambledon hunt met at Church Farm, close to the village of Privet, near Petersfield, Hampshire. It was the end of the season and a number of scuffles took place. Three hunt saboteurs were arrested and charged with violent disorder and causing actual bodily harm. They were subsequently acquitted.

In addition, eight terriermen were arrested as a result of two vicious assaults on saboteurs. In fact the first victim, Jason Fazakerly, was not a saboteur but the secretary of the Portsmouth Green party, who was attending the meet as an impartial observer. He had become separated from the saboteurs and was talking with some hunt supporters when a couple of Land-Rovers drew up and disgorged half a dozen hunt followers.

Fazakerly was set upon by all six men and was beaten and kicked unconscious. Later that day he identified one of his attackers as Kevin Coker — he knew Coker already — and gave police his description. When interviewed by the police, Coker said he had been identified simply because he was the most well known terrierman. Fazakerly said during his evidence under oath that he was 100 per cent certain that Coker had been one of his attackers. Nonetheless, Judge Michael Addison decided to direct the jury to acquit Coker at the end of the prosecution case.

"There might be other terriermen called Kevin. We don't know the names of the other terriermen. Kevin is quite a common name, isn't it? This is not a case of recognition, it's a case of identification." The judge pointed out that one had to be extremely careful with identification evidence and said that the police should have held an identity parade.

Another man, Kenneth Mansbridge, admitted hitting Fazakerly. He had originally been charged with wounding with intent and violent disorder, but the second charge was dropped and the charge of wounding with intent was reduced to one of unlawful wounding, even though Fazakerly had suffered three gashes to his scalp, requiring eight stitches, and a severe beating around the head.

The jury took less than an hour to return a unanimous verdict of guilty. Mansbridge got off lightly, though, with 140 hours of community service. To add insult to Fazakerly's injury, the judge refused to make a compensation order because he believed that Fazakerly had brought the misfortune on his own head.

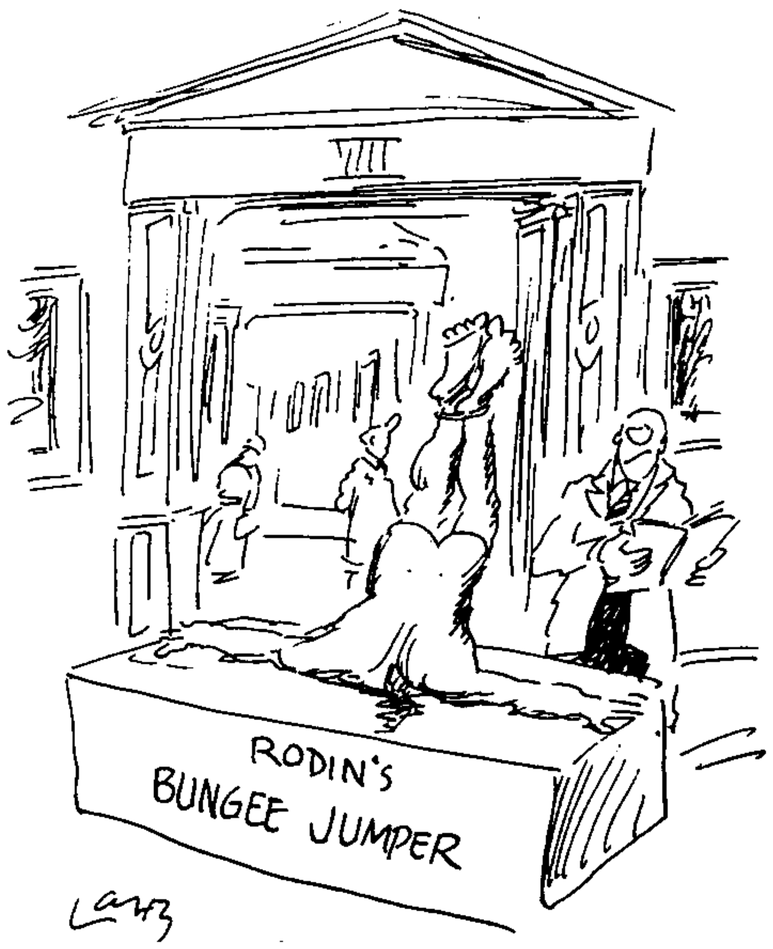
"Having regard to everything, it's quite clear to me that the blame for the disturbance that took place on that day lies principally with hunt saboteurs. They went in very large numbers, 70 to 80 or so. Their intention was to disrupt the hunt. I was told that they had no intention of breaking the law but they did break the law. Stones were thrown, smoke bombs were thrown, horses were prodded with sticks."

None of these assertions were offered as evidence in the case. Instead, they were allegations made by hunt supporters in the earlier, failed police case against the saboteurs. The Portsmouth Saboteurs Group is adamant that if any of their members were to attack horses or hounds they would be expelled.

The other incidents that day were an attack on a saboteurs' minibus during which the driver, Rebecca Price, was injured by a brick thrown through the windscreen (the missile split her head open and she required stitches); and an attack on Mark Ripley by terriermen armed with shovels and pieces of wood which resulted in his head being split open and his being rendered unconscious.

Ripley identified his assailants as Roger George, Nigel Willgoss, Keith Mansbridge (brother of Kenny), Anthony Smart, Simon Marden and John Ellis. All these men were acquitted of this particular assault after the first day of the trial on the grounds that the identification evidence was unsound. Police had shown photos of hunt supporters, published in the *Porstmouth News*, to various witnesses who had been able to identify Ripley's assailants. However, Judge Michael Addison insisted that each of the accused should have been put on identity parades and said that "all the witnesses have an axe to grind."

● The whole thing of course is very embarrassing for Sir John Chadwick, a local circuit judge who rides with the Hursley Hambledon.



EYE TV

Saturday Zoo (C4)

Friday Night With Wogan (BBC1)

THERE was much chat a couple of years back about The Battle Of The Chat Shows, between Terry Wogan and Jonathan Ross.

With both men hosting thrice-weekly peak-time shows — Wogan on BBC1, Ross on C4 — it seemed the plug-and-chuckle format was now established as the basis of a British schedule, with the only competition being one of style. Did you want Wogan's plump and smug do-I-know-you-at-all approach of minimum research and less curiosity, or Ross's sassy and angular brand of more youthful impertinence?

In fact for all their differences of shape, generation and dress, Wogan and Ross turned out to be soulmates. Each was an intelligent man required by the variety of television in which he had selected to work to affect shallowness for the cameras. And so schedulers found, to their surprise, that viewers didn't really want either.

This was a profound shock because the main tactic of British broadcasters in recent times was to copy America, and TV in the USA supports at least four daily evening chat shows: Jay Leno, David Letterman, Arsenio Hall and Larry King. But, in 1993, British television is now left with not a single regular perennial example of the genre. (Only Aspel and Anderson now stand between PR people and the Samaritans.)

The reasons for this cultural difference can be rapidly rehearsed. Fed by Hollywood and New York, the American celebrity market would never be subject to the drought of redoubtables which hit Wogan and Ross, who ended up bickering over who would have Richard Branson and Cliff Richard, Britain's only two great men. Also, America schedules its talk shows in the late evening, while Michael Grade, the honorary American who introduced both the Wogan and Ross shows to British TV, tried to plant them in the early evening.

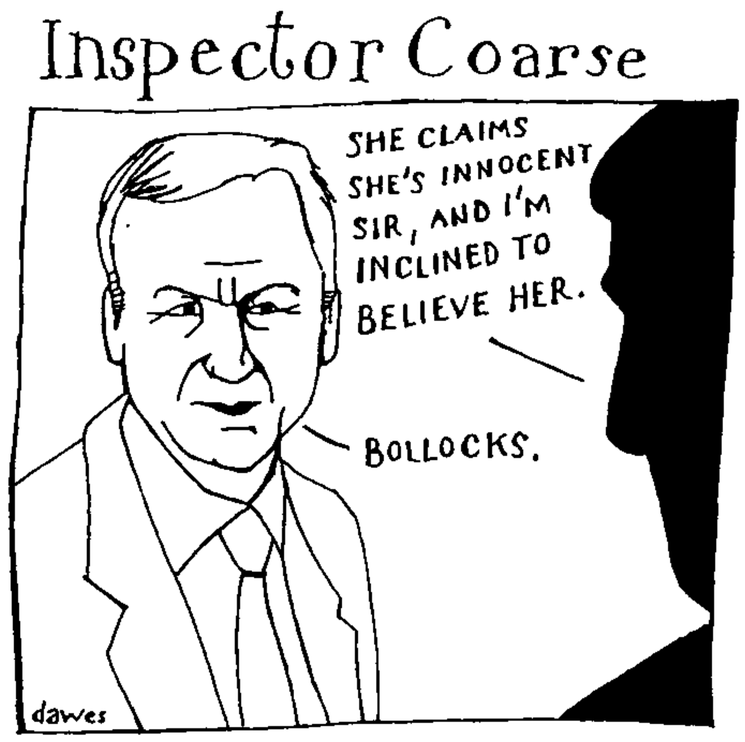
But, whatever the reasons for the fall of the form, the British viewer is now faced with the post-chat-show. With a further unlikely synchronicity, Wogan and Ross have reemerged in nearly identical once-a-week chat-and-gag messes.

Friday Night With Wogan and *Saturday Zoo*, Ross's new vehicle, are both examples of another borrowing from American television: the so-called Zoo Format. One explanation of this tag is that such shows allow in to the captivity of the schedule performers and styles previously seen only in the wild (comedy clubs, youth comics). Another explanation is that you never saw so many different kinds of shit in one place.

To be fair, *Friday Night With Wogan* really belongs to a subgenus: the London Zoo Format. Unable to justify the expense and with falling public interest, it is almost certain to close unless a benefactor can be found. Rarely since Sir David Steel cut a pop single has a man looked as uncomfortable with an artistic form as does Wogan here. There should be a small amount of sympathy for him over this (though not too much, given his salary), but none for his producer and the BBC executives higher up.

The show is built around a sparky commentary on the week's events. As Wogan has too emollient a persona to deliver satire — even if it is written by someone else — an emergency co-host (Frank Skinner, Sandi Toksvig) was introduced to sit beside him and deliver the jokes. Thus was created the first peak-time TV show in which the host is effectively a member of the audience. A constant reproach to the show's original miscalculation, the co-host is the television equivalent of a "runner" for a lame batsman.

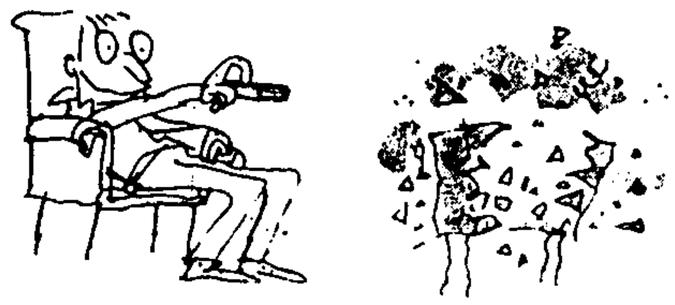
And, now, wouldn't you know, in yet another illustration of the strange way in which Ross and Wogan have become TV's siamese twins, Jonathan, too, finds himself caught frozen in the shell of a show which doesn't suit him. Scared of being thought a chat show, *Saturday Zoo* has only one more or less proper guest each week (Jimmy Nail, in the second). After that, alternative comedians create spoof interviewees for Ross to chat to.



Schizophrenically, given its inspiration, *Saturday Zoo* is really a series of jokes about American television. Some of the gags are good ones, like the send-up of Hollywood News segments, with two camp anchormen. But the format calls for a host who is a comic actor. Labouring pluckily but implausibly through a lengthy seventies flatmates sketch — and then acting out supposed hypnosis by a kooky American new age guru — Ross looked dangerously close to recreating another career link with Wogan.

But Wogan, at least, has the radio job to go back to. Square Eyes is a big enough fan of Ross to hope that he finds a more comfortable vehicle soon. Meanwhile — just as post-modernism became the best PR agent modernism ever had — so the post-chat-show achieves the improbable effect of making one nostalgic for the old plug-and-chuckle chat show.

'Square Eyes'



MEDIA NEWS

JOHN BIRT'S restructuring of the BBC has upset many — not least senior managers at the World Service.

They now know why, despite more than a year's warning of John Tusa's retirement at Christmas, the post of World Service managing director was not advertised until December. At first it seemed like another BBC cock-up; now it is seen as a conspiracy. Birt, it seems, had plans all along.

Under the new structure Bob Phillis, fresh from mass sackings at ITN, will be responsible for the new BBC resources, engineering and services directorate, head BBC Enterprises and take on the pile of formal PR functions that go with the job of being Birt's number two and the BBC's deputy director-general.

These three separate sets of responsibilities apparently not being enough, he is also supposed to find time to be managing director of World Services Radio and Television. The job description would hardly seem to be one for a part-timer. Phillis is supposed to blaze the bi-media trail — merging radio and television.

Despite the stress laid on accountability by Birt in his jargon-riddled address to staff, even World Service management — still busy scrutinising the applicants for the MD's job — were not warned of the changes. "It's a complete stitch up," one moaned last week. "We still haven't been told where Phillis will work from or what his plans are." It's not just the idea of a part-time MD or the potential conflict of interest between World Service Television, a commercial enterprise which owes the BBC nothing except its trading name, and World Service Radio, still funded by grant-in-aid from the foreign office: radio managers fear the worst.

They had prepared the workforce for the appointment of a senior Tory — Lynda Chalker and Sarah Hogg had both been mentioned — as MD to front their efforts to see off growing calls from the foreign office to "commercialise" the funding of World Service Radio, à la Television. As ever the point has been missed: World Service Television has caught on largely because it has captured a market nurtured by the sky-high reputation of World Service Radio.

The foreign office is proposing cuts of more than £5 million for World Service Radio in the next funding round. Will Phillis, a master of rationalisation for profit in the private sector, have the time or inclination to oppose such cuts? How long before nation advertises unto nation?

JOHN BIRT is so used to being taken seriously by BBC toadies that he has been shocked by the response of media hacks to his plans for the corporation.

He has now insisted that the hacks stop sitting together giggling when he talks about important subjects like "Fly-Wheel Resource Target Management Access".

CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
A WOMAN I ADMIRE...
" LIZ, I WANTED THE MOST POWERFUL WOMAN IN BROADCASTING SINCE THE WAR...
BROADCASTING HOUSE
FORGAN APPOINTED
AND ONE WHO CAN STRIKE TERROR INTO THE TIMESERVERS AT THE BBC!...
BUT MAGGIE WOULDN'T DO IT"
"Treble Handbagings all round!"
Scotch
KenPyne

THE *Manchester Evening News* is blatantly puffing the tacky new breakfast TV outlet GMTV, which went on the air at the beginning of the year.

Following the example of the Murdoch titles' promotion of Sky TV, *MEN*'s "news" pages have carried a revealing succession of non-stories — Neil Kinnock's diet; Prince Edward on the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme; Elton John on drugs, etc — which all have one thing in common: prominent plugs for GMTV, the provider of the original interviews.

Strangely the articles do not reveal that the *Manchester Evening News*, part of the Guardian-Manchester Evening News Group, has a sizeable financial stake in GMTV. Why not?

WHILE heritage secretary Peter Brooke gets hot and bothered about British people being able to watch porn on TV like everyone else in *Europe*, members of the Independent Television Commission are keeping very quiet.

Nanny Brooke is worried about Red Hot Dutch, a satellite sex station beamed here from Denmark via Eutelsat, but the ITC is embarrassed because it has licensed a pirate TV company that broadcasts from Britain to Scandinavia to get round the Norsemen's tough laws on commercial TV.

TV1000 London Ltd, operating from seedy studios in West Drayton, sends four TV services up to the Astra satellites, courtesy of British Telecom's London teleport at North Woolwich. Three times a week it suspends its normal output of recent English-language movies to hand over to Yiva Thompson in Sweden. Yiva is an exotic bondage blonde in black leather, who presents explicit lesbian and heterosexual videos which make Red Hot Dutch's offerings look like choir practice and would never be allowed on Scandinavian terrestrial TV.

The ITC was confident no one in the UK would ever see TV1000's films or porn because the company uses a scrambled signal that cannot be picked up in the UK. But it reckoned without Alan Sugar, whose UK launch of Amstrad's SRD600 satellite receiver has now caused much anguish. Not only does it convert the signals to PAL so they can be viewed on British TVs, but it also includes a Eurocrypt decoder to unscramble them.

Demand in the UK for illicit TV1000 smart cards is now brisk, much to the chagrin of Rupert Murdoch's Sky network which thought it had a UK monopoly on recent movies. Worse — or better — the SRD600 has a second dish input socket so grunt and groan devotees can also receive Red Hot Dutch and even the notorious Canal Plus from France.

THE complacency of the boxing establishment seems to be unshaken — even by damaging allegations in Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme, *The Fight Game*.

The great and the good on the British Boxing Board of Control appear untroubled, for example, by the fact that the board's general secretary, John Morris, cleared the American heavyweight Oscar Holman to box while he was known to be suffering from a potentially lethal skull condition.

Typically the beneficiaries of Morris's decision, promoter Mickey Duff (on whose promotion Holman fought as a late replacement) and his partner Jarvis Astaire, deputy chairman of Wembley Stadium, have reacted with more bluster. Duff instantly issued a challenge to the programme-makers to appear on Channel 4's *Right to Reply*, and Astaire, too, was prepared to appear.

Not surprisingly, some at Channel 4 were initially confused by this tactic, as Duff had replied to their offers of an on-screen interview with a tirade of abuse and the unlikely claim that he was, in fact, a saint. Astaire and Duff seized upon the channel's hesitation and made it known among the boxing fraternity that *Dispatches* had "chickened out".

Negotiations about the *Right to Reply* programme continued into the next day. Soon it became clear that it was John Morris of the board who had "chickened out". He was no doubt embarrassed by Astaire's previous TV appearance, an interview on *Dispatches*, when he had unwisely admitted that members of the supposedly impartial board had recommended boxers to sign with Duff.

By the afternoon the makers of *Dispatches*, happy with the proposed format of the programme, agreed to go on and informed *Right to Reply* of their decision. Within hours they received the news that Duff and Astaire had, in turn, "chickened out".

HACKWATCH No 38: Julie Burchill

IT IS HARD to miss the 100-decibel publicity campaign for Julie Burchill's new novel, *No Exit*. In the past week the author has been the subject of a two-page profile in the *Guardian*, a full-page OBN-job on the front of the *Sunday Times* style section and a cover story in the *Observer* magazine.

There are certain points that are almost always made in such articles. Burchill is highly paid (over £100,000 for her *Mail on Sunday* column, plus similar sums in book advances); but she earns it, because millions of readers are provoked by her "controversial" opinions and "witty" prose.

"Every Monday morning," according to the *Guardian*, "the nation divides between those who think yesterday's column was brilliant and those who think she is demented, stark raving mad, bad, a little sad and probably dangerous."

It seems more likely that much of the nation doesn't give a toss. Burchill's repertoire is small, silly and desperately dull. Jews are great; Arabs are brutes; Diana is brill; Charles is a git; Mick Jagger's a berk; and, er, that's it.

Reviewing Camille Paglia's latest book in the *Spectator* two weeks ago, Burchill remarked snootily that "in the bland lo-cal cultural wasteland of the contemporary USA it is quite easy to become famous by saying a little very loudly and a lot." Is it any less easy in Britain? To judge by Burchill's *Mail on Sunday* columns of the past year, probably not.

16 February 1992: Attacks Mick Jagger ("What a prannet!") for "laying down port and putting the kiddies down for public school".

8 March: Attacks the heir to the throne as the "Prince of Wails" for his speech in defence of traditional cheeses.

15 March: Praises the heir's wife. "The Princess of Wales is obviously the most wonderful mother in the world and, given the chance by old Moanalot, she would be a great wife, too."

22 March: "The Jewish people," Burchill observes, "are infinitely admirable." So why do the present generation of Rothschilds give their daughters such *goyim* names as Kate and Jessica? "I suggest that the next generation look to their Hebrew names for boys and girls, where a smorgasbord of mellifluous handles awaits..." Burchill, as we shall see, has quite an appetite for smorgasbord.

12 April: Attacks Mick Jagger for going off to Thailand with a mystery blonde. "Jagger is now, essentially, a figure of fun, a half-centenarian rebel rocker who lays pipes of port rather than groupies."

19 April: Today's column is embellished with a typically hilarious Burchill joke. "I always thought that Andrew Lloyd Webber was a vulgar little man, but his latest purchase — £10 million sterling for a Canaletto — takes the prize for conspicuous consumption. Ten mill for an ice cream — really! Or so I thought, till I learned that he had actually bought a painting."

17 May: The sight of the Princess of Wales kissing a polio victim prompts the following conclusion: "I've decided it doesn't really matter that the Prince of Wails would rather be scratching around in the fetid earth of Turkey than vacationing in one of the world's most beautiful countries with one of the world's most beautiful women. Because the P.O.W. has now gone far beyond being a mere consort, or one half of a celebrity couple: *she is the point*. Far beyond being a Windsor, she has become an independent icon of trendy kindliness; the Church of England in high heels... To the crowds who turn out to touch the hem of her Hermes scarf, she is a glorious white goddess, bringing the benediction of birth control and a sensible diet to an ambitious, agonised Third World. Her husband would only get lost in her glitter."

7 June: More on the Princess of Wales. It has an oddly familiar ring. "She has gone far beyond being a consort now, even one half of a celebrity couple. She is the point. Far beyond being a Windsor, Diana has become an icon of sexy saintliness — the Church of England at play, in high heels. She is Madonna crossed with Mother Teresa... Like it or not, the crowds who turn out to touch her see a dazzling white goddess bringing the benediction of birth control and beauty hints to an ambitious, agonised Third World. Her husband would only choke on her dust."

14 June: Burchill apportions blame for the state of the white goddess's marriage: "It was, after all, her husband and not the headlines which has been the *cause* of her unhappiness."

28 June: Another helping of her favourite dish. "It's Wimbledon time again — a smorgasbord of strawberries, cream and sexism."

12 July: Attacks the heir to the throne — the "Prince of Wails" — as "a sour, selfish, whining windbag". Princess Di, by contrast, is a "high-spirited, open-hearted charmer... a model hybrid of Mother Teresa and Marilyn Monroe." Burchill also finds space to attack the producers of *Eldorado*, "who promised us a smorgasbord of sin in the sun" but have failed to deliver.

9 August: Burchill has decided to leave her name off the electoral register. "By not voting, people are expressing a healthy, democratic disgust with the smorgasbord of mediocrity they find before them every four years." After this important announcement, she turns her attention to attacking the "hideous" Mick Jagger.

16 August: Attacks the angst-ridden heir to the throne — "HRH the Prince of Wails himself", as she wittily dubs him.

23 August: Praises the Jews, "the majestic master race which produced Paul Newman, John Garfield, Benji Netanyahu, Douglas *fils* and *pere* and my hubby."

27 September: Time for another rib-tickler. "So the Princess of Wales has finally traded in that over-priced, under-worked German rustbucket. No, not her husband, silly! Her Mercedes car."

4 October: The gags just keep on coming. "So the Princess of Wales visited a London day centre for the single homeless this week. Nice to know she's keeping in touch with La Fergie."

18 October: Camilla Parker-Bowles is looking gaunt. Could this be because she is wearing herself out "laying on a non-stop smorgasbord of sex and sashimi" for Prince Charles? Meanwhile, "Diana, as per, looks like five feet ten inches of complete and utter babe-osity."

15 November: Back to the majestic master race. "Judaism is, without doubt, the world's greatest religion historically, intellectually and aesthetically... The Jews have managed to survive brilliantly everything that history has thrown at them."

22 November: The government has published a league table of GCSE results. "And what a sumptuous smorgasbord of hypocrisy the assembled Left served up over it."

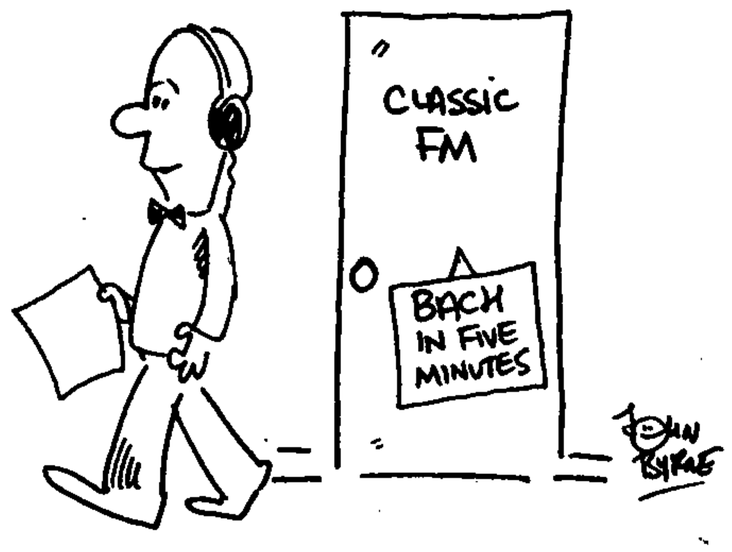
13 December: Burchill interrupts a holiday to comment on the royal separation. Surprise, surprise, she has nothing but praise for the "orchidaceously" lovely Diana: "Over the years she has mutated into a unique modern creature, a devoted mother, a working royal but also a living, breathing, demanding woman who refused to live a lie."

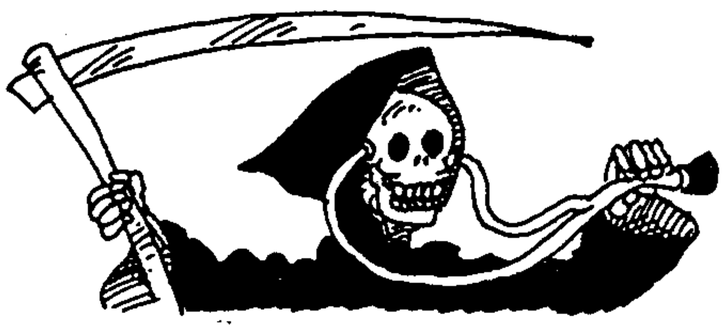
3 January: Back from holiday, Burchill is still drooling over "Diana the Divine... the Orchidaceous One."

10 January: Burchill has been enjoying "the rather edifying spectacle of the Israelis kicking a few Palestinians around". The 400 Palestinians who were herded into no man's land are "large as life and twice as ugly".

17 January: Further thoughts on Princess Diana: she is "orchidaceously beautiful, a friend to the sick and a snazzy dresser".

24 January: A final Burchillian joke, complete with its obligatory exclamation mark: "The Queen took the extreme step of cancelling several public engagements last week due to chronic vomiting. So SHE read the Camillagate transcripts, too!" Geddit?





DOING THE ROUNDS

HAVING fought a long and acrimonious battle to attain the grades their experience deserves, many senior nurses across the country have priced themselves out of the market.

Instead of honouring the grades awarded at tribunal, managers have instead decided to reappraise and readvertise nursing posts en masse, inviting the present incumbents to reapply for invariably downgraded jobs or face "voluntary" redundancy.

At **Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust**, the senior paediatric sister with more than 25 years' experience returned from an RSCN paediatric course to find that her G grade post no longer existed — but she was welcome to take on an E grade staff nurse post instead!

The other sister and senior staff nurses were offered similar cheap alternatives and many have now left, leaving wards 16 and 18 very short on experience. This follows hot on the heels of the management's ill-advised bid to abolish the night sisters who coordinate out-of-hours care around the hospital (*Eye* 708).

At nearby **Minehead hospital**, a ward closure over Christmas created an inordinate amount of extra work for staff on the remaining wards. Imagine their delight when some of the money saved from this endeavour was spent on a 10 percent productivity bonus... for manager Mrs E. Saffin. Meanwhile, **Yeovil and East Somerset NHS Trust** has had to close surgical and maternity wards after suddenly finding itself £750,000 in the red.

● THE CASH-STRAPPED social services department of the London borough of **Bromley** has taken the government's advice "not to raise unrealistic expectations on the part of users and carers". Doubtless wary of the public's right of access to files, it has told staff "not to inform the customer of the local authority's inability or unwillingness to meet assessed need" and "not to record unmet needs on the case file."

● A CONSULTANT orthopaedic surgeon at **Sutton's St Helier NHS Trust** has written to a GP to explain the year-long waiting list. "We would like to get our waiting list down to under six months if we had the contract (ie money) from the health authority to do this. If the GP is a fundholder, of course, we are not held up by financial constraints." And at **Harlow's Princess Alexandra Hospital** (refused trust status due to gross financial deficit), managers have circulated a memo to all **West Essex** and **East Herts** GPs, announcing the delay of operations until April. The memo concludes: "None of the above applies to referrals from GP fundholders."

Other impecunious hospitals offering preferential services to fundholders include the **Princess Royal** in **Haywards Heath**, the **Royal Hampshire** in **Winchester**, the **Lister** in **Stevenage**, **Barnet General** and **Edgware hospitals** and **Southend Healthcare Trust** and **Basildon and Thurrock Trust**. Some hospitals are unable even to cope with emergencies. **Bath's Royal United Hospital** was on red alert for the first 11 days of January and had to restrict emergency admissions and pepper the gynaecology wards with men. **East Birmingham** and **Sheffield's Northern General Hospital** were reduced to emergencies only, as were 13 health districts in London which, if you believe Tomlinson, already have far too many beds than is good for them.

● LEN FENWICK, chief executive of **Newcastle's Freeman Trust Hospital**, got in a flap when his new cardiothoracic surgeon decided to work part time in a nearby private hospital in direct competition with the trust. Mr Fenwick has now altered the contracts of new consultants, forbidding them to practise privately without his permission. Ironically, elective cardiothoracic surgery has since been cancelled due to lack of funds.

● AT **St Lawrence's hospital** for the mentally handicapped in **Caterham**, part of **Croydon's Lifecare Trust**, manager Kieron Stanley has been dismissed for sexual harassment. Quite how he landed the £25,000-a-year job plus house in the first place is a matter of some debate. His two previous suspensions from duty at NHS hospitals, one of them Croydon's **Warlingham Park**, are well known. Trust chief executive Ian Semple presumably has an explanation.

● THE **Royal Shrewsbury Hospital** has raised its parking fees, axed meals in the visitors' canteen and frozen new appointments in an attempt to clawback its £174,000 deficit. As personnel manager Ron Jones put it: "Things are looking a little grim."

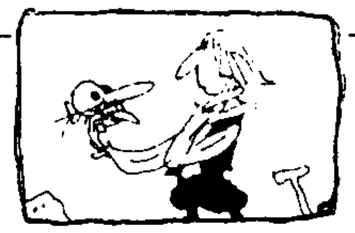
● PATIENTS awaiting their Friday physiotherapy session at the newly-trusted **East Surrey Hospital** were recently told to stay away and exercise at home. The reason? Fragrant health minister Virginia Bottomley was touring the new phase II building and the gymnasium was requisitioned for coffee and mutual congratulation.

● *EYE* readers with designs on natural childbirth would do well to avoid **Birmingham Maternity Hospital**, where the caesarian section rate is 25 percent. By contrast, the nearby **Dudley Road Hospital** has a section rate of 11 percent.

● THE ONCE prestigious **Alder Hey hospital** in **Liverpool** is having trouble getting to grips with trust status. Paediatric cardiac surgeon Roxanne McKay resigned after deciding that a child's death was due to the ban on surgery imposed to balance the books prior to opting out. Seven senior nurses have now followed suit. The number of operations has fallen by 20 percent and parents who can afford a £15,000 private operation are encouraged to realise their assets.

● RONALD C. LYLE, general manager for theatres at **Bristol's Southmead Hospital Independent Trust (SHIT)**, is trying to curb the £10,000-a-month overspend in his operating theatres. In a memo to all surgeons, he announced that "the practice of creeping development must stop with immediate effect". This creeping development includes all minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery that allows rapid rehabilitation and a quick return to work.

M.D.



LUVVIES

(on the art of the advertising voice-over)

"It's quite daunting. You get 30 seconds to create a character who must mention the product's name at least twice, while still sounding natural. If you take 31 seconds, it's no good." — **Tony Head**, Gold Blend.

"Playing a pimple or a flat tyre is much harder than it sounds." — **Peter Jeffrey**, Tesco.

"The client will usually want last-minute alterations such as changing 'ring' to 'phone' and 'phone' to 'call', so you often have to go back over it, changing and refining to the nth degree." — **Angus Deayton.**

Evening Standard

Contributors: Numerous.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for similar submissions.

Bankers

IN THE last *Eye* we reported on the findings of Neric Automation, Leicester*, which markets a computer programme to check discrepancies in bank accounts.

In a random test the firm found that 11 out of 20 account-holders had been overcharged for their overdrafts. In view of this margin for error, Neric Automation asked why it was almost unheard of for official receivers to check whether companies in liquidation had been overcharged by their banks.

The answer is that in most cases the receiver is appointed by the bank, which is a secured creditor, and it is plainly not in the receiver's interest to upset a bank since he or she might lose lucrative business in the future. Similarly, the receiver appoints the liquidator, and yet another cosy relationship negates further investigation into overcharging by banks.

Because the liquidator has to be approved by creditors at an official creditors' meeting, it must be in the creditors' own interest to ensure that the bank has been correctly charging an insolvent company on any overdraft that it may have had. Any creditor should thus demand that the bank account be investigated fully over the preceding six years (the maximum recovery time by statute) and to this end Neric Automation has suggested that the following letter should be presented at such meetings:

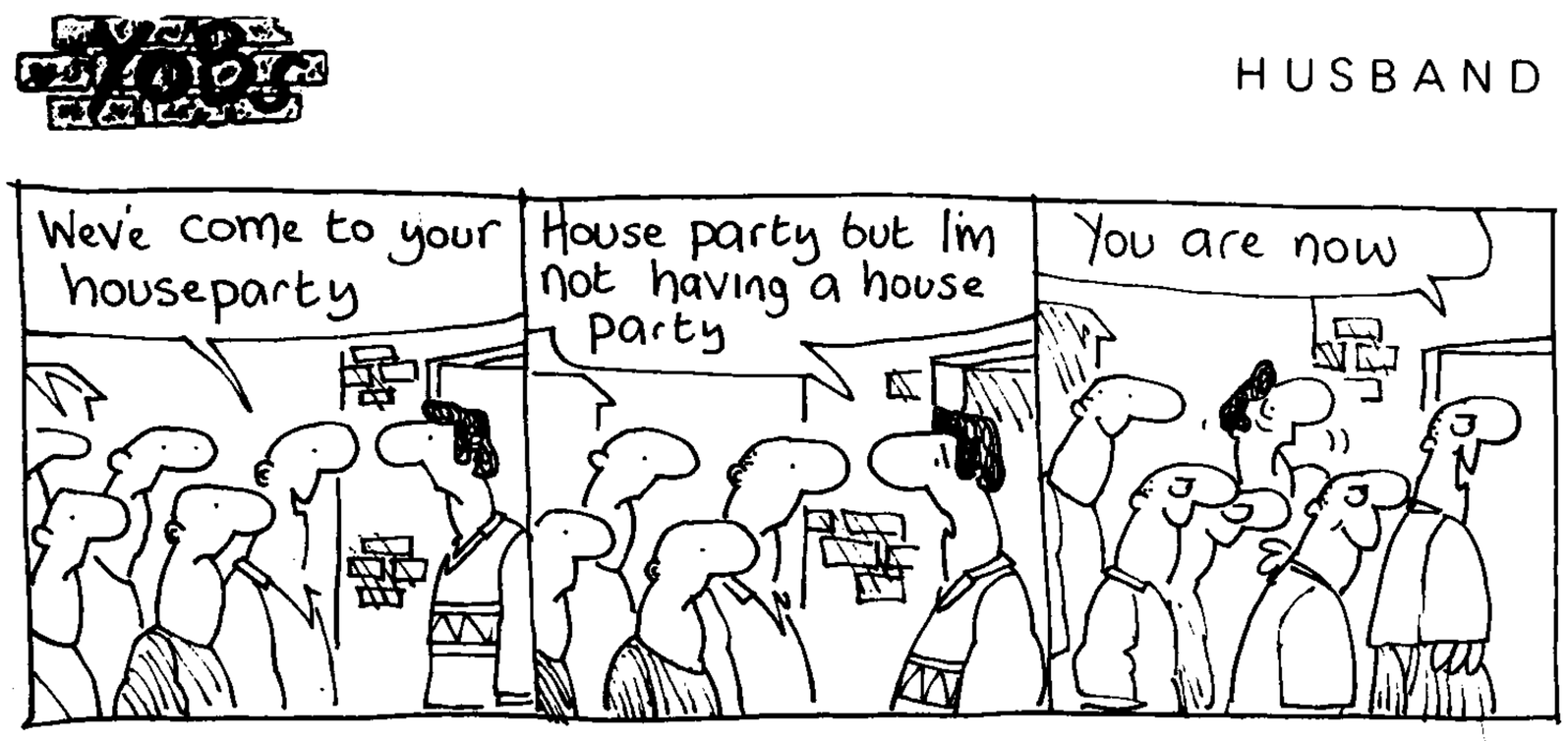
"Bank interest charges have been excessively applied on overdrawn accounts in more than 50 percent of cases investigated by independent companies and individuals using computer programmes specifically designed for this purpose. In view of this fact may we, as creditors of ..., have your absolute guarantee that as liquidator responsible for the creditors you will fully investigate the bank account of the company (in liquidation) with particular regard to the possible overcharging, and provide a full and detailed report to all creditors that this investigation has been carried out. Furthermore that as liquidator, should any overcharge be discovered, you will pursue the offending bank for full repayment."

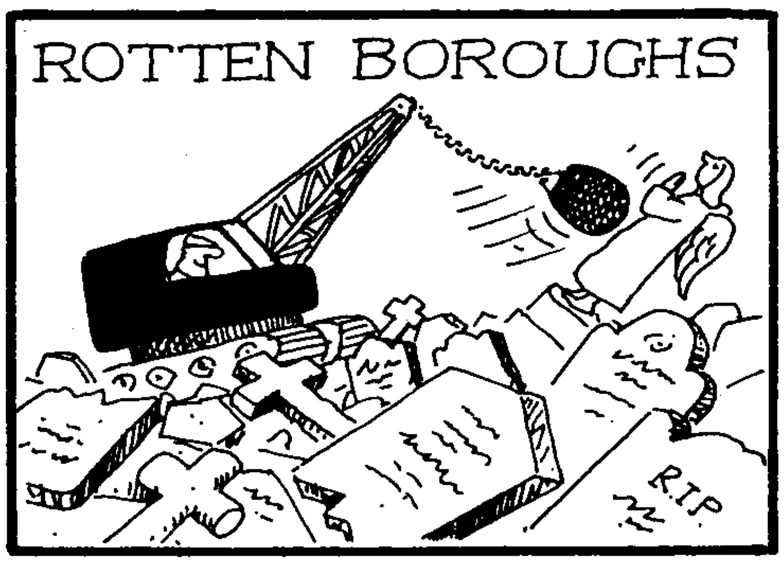
Another firm in the account-checking field is Bankchek, which markets a system for companies with complex banking arrangements and overseas accounts. Since Bankchek also found a similarly high rate of discrepancies in accounts it has researched, it intends to carry out a countrywide analysis by seeking 500 companies who will submit one year's bank statements for analysis.

The firm has asked if any *Eye* readers are interested in taking part.† The normal cost would be £375 plus VAT per year, but for the survey Bankchek is proposing to do it for £99 plus VAT. "We hope to complete this 'national audit' by the end of February, which we think will provide an all over picture," said a Bankchek spokesman. "The audit is the first of its kind in this country and is being supported by the British Banking Association."

* Neric Automation of Leicester, tel: 0537 56411.

† Bankchek, 1st Floor, Witton House, Lowere Road, Chorleywood, Herts. Telephone 0923 284214.





STOCKPORT

THE GOOD NEWS for chargepayers in the quaint Cheshire market town of Stockport — that the council's BCCI-loving Liberal administration has been booted out — has been shortlived: a ludicrous Labour-Tory coalition has now taken over.

Stockport Liberals rewrote the rule book on how not to run a local authority after they took control of the council three years ago as chief power-brokers in a coalition with Labour. Their disastrous regime culminated in a generous £1 million gift to the drug-running Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

Recently, faced with having to implement a £9 million cuts package, the Liberals incensed their coalition-partners by drawing up plans to axe nearly 1,000 jobs and close many so-called "front-line services" — excluding councillors' allowances. So angry were both Labour and Conservative councillors, they immediately clubbed together to vote out the Liberals and put together their own 1,000 job-cuts package.

Of course had the council not sanctioned the Liberals' £10 million spending spree on a new non-Olympic size swimming pool (of no use to nearby Manchester's Olympic nomination campaign), no cuts would have been needed anyway.

Ironically, the Liberals are now witnessing the fragility of democracy where three, rather than two, main parties battle for power. In Stockport both Labour and Conservatives have 17 councillors while the Liberals have 26 members. Very little local government takes place, but much time is spent drawing up coalitions, although the new alliances (*sic*) make Stockport Liberals the largest municipal group in the country not to be in power.

EXETER

LABOUR supporters in Devon's most proletarian town have unearthed a legal minefield which should help the cause of rotten boroughs everywhere.

A long-standing municipal tradition, enshrined in the 1972 local government act, of councillors and council candidates living or working locally, has been thrown into jeopardy by a recent appeal court decision concerning Exeter Tory Ramon Yeo.

At last May's council elections Yeo (pronounced Yo!, hip-hop style) beat Labour by 74 votes, but Exeter's clotted-cream socialists objected to his eligibility as a candidate on the grounds that he neither lived nor worked within Exeter's boundaries and therefore had no residential or financial interest in the city's welfare.

Labour took the case to the high court where Yeo explained to m'learned brothers that his role as an Exeter councillor counted as "working" within the city's boundaries, and even gave the civic centre as his office address.

The high court was not impressed and disqualified him on the grounds that Yeo could not properly be said to have had "principal or only place of work" within the area of the city of Exeter for the 12 months prior to his nomination as a candidate.

The matter appeared to be over until last October when Yeo took his case to the court of appeal. There he got the high court's decision reversed, successfully claiming that the 500 hours service he had put in on council business over the previous year constituted work.

The appeal court's ruling paves the way for councillors to retire, move hundreds of miles away from their wards but retain their seats. It will also enable people to stand for council if their principal work is as a "shadow councillor" — ie a candidate — and may pave the way for MPs who live outside Britain to continue at Westminster. Meanwhile Exeter Labour party faces a £20,000 legal bill and has started a Yeoballs fund-raising campaign.

BIRMINGHAM

A GRIM pin-down-style regime has been uncovered in a Birmingham "special" school following a mass revolt by staff.

Charles Burns school, Moseley, caters for 55 primary school children with learning problems; but things seem to have gone badly wrong under head teacher Sheila Boyle.

At the centre of the problems are her use of "time-out rooms" which bear a startling similarity to the appalling techniques used in the Staffordshire children's home pindown scandal (see *Eyes passim*).

Pupils at Charles Burns were locked in the rooms, with just a urine-soaked carpet for company, often for hours on end, say the teachers in statements obtained by the *Eye*. They were also allegedly beaten with Mrs Boyle's favoured black pump and dragged along the corridors by their heels.

Unfortunately the school staff showed little spirit — some asked for transfers and others put up with the regime for years. But eventually it became too much. More than a dozen collectively recruited a solicitor and lodged formal complaints with the city council, which has suspended Mrs Boyle and started disciplinary proceedings.

However, parents who are cheeky enough to want to know what might have happened to their children will be disappointed. The council has told none of them what has happened and is holding the inquiry in private.

FIRE NEWS

MURKEYSIDE'S chief fire officer Andrew Best still hasn't lived down revelations that he danced in women's underwear at a senior officers' thrash last spring (*Eye* 790).

With the Murkeyside fire authority (MFA) facing a savage round of cuts, Best's priorities are original, to say the least. In his first report of the new year he requested that the MFA affiliate to the International Association of Fire Chiefs. He reported that Murkeyside would greatly benefit from "the sharing of experience and ideas" by belonging to this august international body — and by sending a delegate to its twice-yearly conferences to learn all about putting out prairie fires in Idaho.

Affiliation fees were a modest $40 (£27), but members of the authority were taken aback at the cost of £2,500 to send a delegate to a spring convention in San José, southern California. Best recommended himself as the person ideally suited to go.

Old political hands on the MFA came up with an astute compromise. The authority agreed to fork out the £27 subscription, but suggested Best find the two-and-a-half grand for the junket from his own pocket. He was thus shown that the way to San José would not be at the expense of taxpayers.

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'New Muckspreader'

OF COURSE it is hardly headline-grabbing news that Britain is in the grip of its worst food-poisoning epidemic in history, but figures released last week showed that in 1992 salmonella cases soared by an astonishing 39 percent.

A few years back, when the media were obsessed with salmonella food-poisoning, they wrote about nothing else for weeks on end. Last week they didn't take a blind bit of notice.

As we know, the great Edwina Currie "egg-scare" of 1988 prompted our wise government to take drastic measures to stamp out an epidemic which had caused one of the gravest political crises of the Thatcher era.

When Mrs Currie blamed it all on eggs, she had been told to do so by the clever scientists of the public health laboratory service (PHLS). They were very excited to have discovered that all this food-poisoning was caused by eggs because at that time they were facing massive cuts in their government-funded laboratories. But suddenly it looked as if they could justify their existence after all.

The reward for the brilliantly simple scientific discovery was not only that the PHLS was allowed to keep its laboratories. John Gummer's MAFF also had problems and was being faced with cuts of up to 400 professional staff. Therefore, MAFF undertook to produce an equally simple solution to the problem by massacring every egg-laying flock in Britain where salmonella was detected (not very difficult, since salmonella is as common in the environment as cold germs).

Since 1989, MAFF vets have massacred more than three million chickens and driven more than 5,000 poultry farmers out of business. But at least MAFF has kept its vets gainfully employed.

Was it all worth it? Of course it was. Thanks to the brilliant diagnosis by the PHLS and the MAFF reign of terror, the dreadful scourge of salmonella has at last been stamped out to the point where it is now increasing at an even faster rate than it did in 1988. The particular strain which caused the concern, Enteritidis PT4, is now *82 percent higher than when Mrs Currie made her famous last stand.*

So inspired has Mr Gummer been by the success of his campaign against Britain's small poultry keepers he has now turned his attention to the meat industry and launched a wonderful new scheme to charge Britain's 700 slaughterhouses £50 million a year to be inspected by MAFF vets.

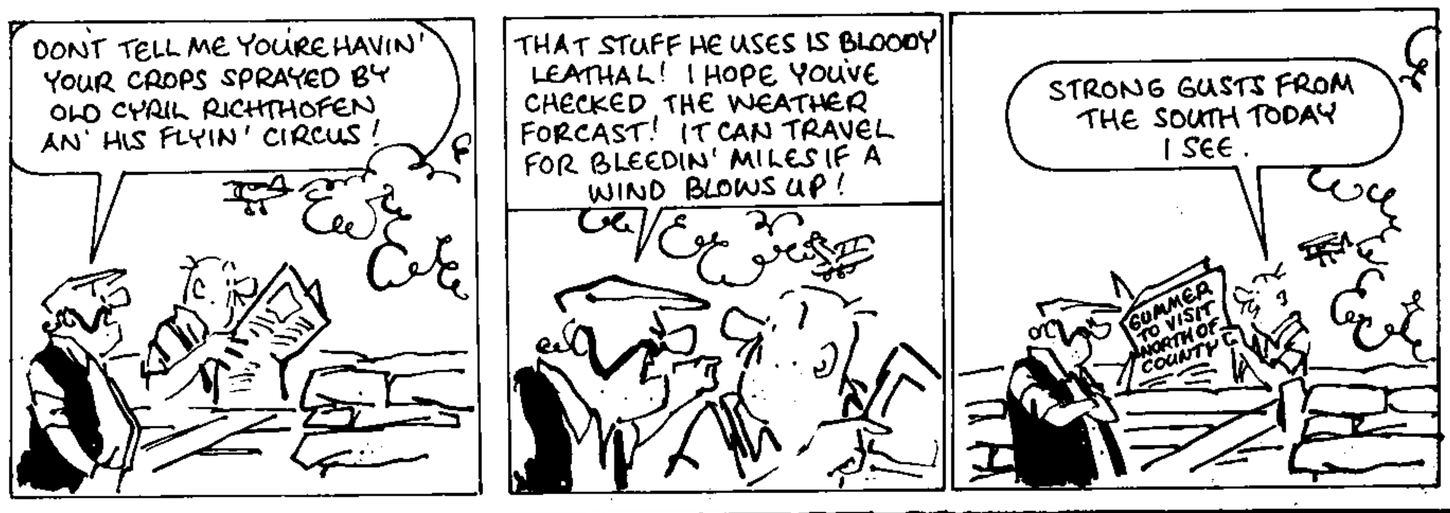
So astronomic are the costs of this scheme (some victims are having to pay vets £60 an hour or anything upwards of £40,000 a year in addition to existing meat inspection charges) that Mr Gummer was recently asked to say precisely what the purpose of it was.

His reply was that vets are uniquely qualified to spot salmonellosis, listeriosis, leptospirosis and drug residues. This was especially interesting since, as any scientist outside the MAFF or the PHLS could have told him, these conditions can *only* be identified in a laboratory. In other words, the vets are adding precisely nothing to the efficiency of the system — at a cost to the industry which, it is estimated, will eventually force more than half the UK slaughterhouses to shut down.

With such inspired leadership from Mr Gummer, minister for veterinary employment, it is hardly surprising that salmonella food-poisoning is expected this year to set a new record of 40,000 cases, from its present base of just over 31,000. The farming industry can hardly wait for the next scheme to reduce salmonella even further.

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


DONT TELL ME YOURE HAVIN' YOUR CROPS SPRAYED BY OLD CYRIL RICHTHOFEN AN' HIS FLYIN' CIRCUS!
THAT STUFF HE USES IS BLOODY LEATHAL! I HOPE YOUVE CHECKED THE WEATHER FORCAST! IT CAN TRAVEL FOR BLEEDIN' MILES IF A WIND BLOWS UP!
STRONG GUSTS FROM THE SOUTH TODAY I SEE.
GUMMER TO VISIT NORTH OF COUNTY

Letters

Blasphemy, lies

Sir,

As a long-term follower of your good organ as well as of Steve Bell's cartoons, may I comment on the wobbly thrown by your correspondent, Moyra Sheldon?

1 *The blasphemy, to my mind, lies not in the cartoonist's parody of an overworked, hence universally recognisable theme, but in its subject matter — the corrupt and venal government of an allegedly Christian state. (Put away the invoice pad, Carter-Fuck — all governments are corrupt and venal. But not all claim the moral high ground.)*

2 *In Islam, of course, the precept regarding graven images is much more rigidly observed than in our decadent version of morality. Hence there would be no "Adoration" for Bell to parody, had the offence been perpetrated in an Islamic state.*

3 *Ms Sheldon should cast an eye over* LE MAN, *a Turkish equivalent of the* EYE, *whose scurrility and frequent portrayal of copulatory acts would perhaps surprise the average born-again Christian looking for guidance in an Islamic framework.*

4 *I cannot protest too strongly at the printing by you of such self-righteous and monumentally smug material as Ms Sheldon's letter. But as I have no subscription, I cannot very well cancel it. And it's a free country. Thanks, perhaps and in part to you — but never to our vocal community of religious bigots.*

Yours faithfully,
J.H. BRINDLE,

Oban, Argyll.

Newly marred

Sir,

It is a pity you marred your "Clinton Update" (811) by the usual anti-Semitic references which seem to cloud your attitude to the governor, as well as a glaring inaccuracy. Despite her academic background (she is the former head of the University of Wisconsin), Ms Shalala is in fact the nominee for secretary of the department of health and human services (the equivalent of our old DHSS). The new education secretary is Richard Riley, a former governor of South Carolina, and a much more sensible appointment.

What is interesting about Ms Shalala is not her parentage but that she is virtually the only sop to Mrs Clinton's radical feminist circle in Clinton's cabinet appointments, which largely consist of well-heeled lobbyists who represented the corporate interests who financed his campaign so handsomely, both during the primaries and the subsequent general election.

What is also interesting is that despite the fact that the governor, now president, made welfare reform and the introduction of "workfare" a key part of his election programme and that this played a significant role in capturing the suburban middle-class vote, Ms Shalala made no mention of this when enumerating her priorities for her new department.

As the 1970s seem to be making a reappearance in the fields of fashion and popular music, it seems this trend is being extended to politics as well. You may recall that in that decade there was a southern governor whose name began with "C", who also had an opinionated wife as well as detailed plans for social reform, and was elected president after defeating an incumbent Republican. The result was legislative stalemate, double digit inflation and unemployment, a renewal of the cold war and the humiliation of the United States at the hands of a Middle Eastern dictator. Let us hope that we (and the United States) can survive until President Perot's inauguration in 1997.

Yours faithfully,
ALLAN DRAYCOTT,

London N4.

'R' soul

Sir,

Fame at last! What a pity that your article (Rotten Boroughs, EYE *811) was almost entirely true and I have nothing to sue you about!*

Tenants on our estates are fed up with spartists trying to hi-jack their meetings with abusive and aggressive behaviour which diverts attention from real concerns about the future of their estates. My previous link with CSL was hardly a secret and was included in a newsletter to all tenants shortly after I arrived at Brent. There was no more uproar than you might expect when an unwanted gatecrasher appears and refuses to leave.

Talking of literacy and accuracy in correspondence, your other story about us, you yourself appear to have mislaid your "R"s somewhere. We are Brent not "Bent" and proud of it!

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN QUEEN,

Director of Housing Services, Brent Council.

Back dated

Sir,

I refer to Sally Deedes' article and recent correspondence on cot deaths being caused by reusing cot mattresses.

The circumstantial evidence that second-use mattresses are to blame is compelling. For instance:

1 *In a study of 2,412 cot death babies carried out by the OPCS, second babies were twice and third babies three times as likely to die as first babies.*

2 *Cot deaths have dropped for the first quarter (which is always the worst) by 75 percent between 1988-92. This has been partly because babies now lie on their backs, but the reduction also dates from when Mr Richardson suggested a new mattress for each baby in 1989.*

3 *Out of over 130 cot deaths we have investigated, over 90 percent of them were on second-use mattresses.*

The easiest way to prove whether or not cot deaths are caused by second-use mattresses would be for the department of health to ask the OPCS to investigate whether the last 100 first babies to die of cot death were on a new or second-use mattresses. In spite of me badgering them to do this they continue to "bury their head in the sand". Can anybody suggest why?

Yours faithfully,
P.R. MITCHELL,

Winchester, Hants.

Lookalike

Clinton

Bremner

Sir,

I wonder whether any of your readers have been struck by the remarkable resemblance between those two men of many voices, Rory Bremner and President Bill Clinton? Do you think by any chance they are related?

Yours faithfully,
W.R. LAMBERT,

Cardiff.

Wry oh wry

Sir,

Scurrilous insinuations appeared in the last EYE *questioning the integrity of Mancunian footballing god and Taggart-lookalike Alex Ferguson, insinuations that look pretty silly upon perusal of his already seminal footballing treatise,* SIX YEARS AT UNITED.

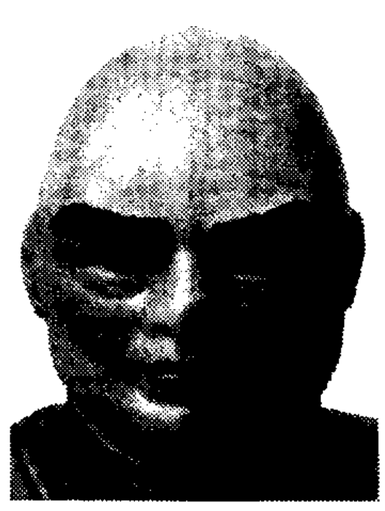
Taggart's "Nietzschean" smorgasbord approach to team selection, the premier league, BSkyB and his son Jason, are all discussed in a frank, no-holds-barred way. Indeed, his opinions on the farcical satellite TV deal are so forthright that he is forced to exhibit the wry humour for which he is so well known in these parts, to whit, declaring that his son Jason works for BSkyB, or "at least he is until they read what I've had to say about them in this book!"

What a father! What a guy! What a team!

Yours etc.,
CHRIS AND KARL,

Manchester.

Lookalike



Lamont

Hood

Sir,

Can the resemblance between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and The Hood (arch-criminal of Thunderbirds) be mere coincidence? Surely they are related.

Yours faithfully,
C. JOHNSON,

Redland, Bristol.

Rotten at the core

Sir,

Your correspondent is wrong to accuse Renfrew district council of sinning by demolishing buildings in Paisley's High Street (Letters, 811).

Actually RDC proved themselves to be saviours. Does G. Morison know why the property was demolished? Because the watchful eye of RDC recognised it had become unsafe.

One could almost detect a note of glee when senior planning officials announced it was to be razed, adding that they had been watching the property closely for some time. The element of glee wasn't that they had found a solution to a festering problem but that they had spotted its structural soundness immediately. They deserved to be congratulated for that. After their ten-year long vigil its time of execution had arrived. It's noble too that no particular individuals grabbed all the credit for spotting the property in its death throes first. No, it was an harmonious, back-patting, corporate form of spotting.

Yours faithfully,
C. MORRISON,

Paisley.

Composite

Sir,

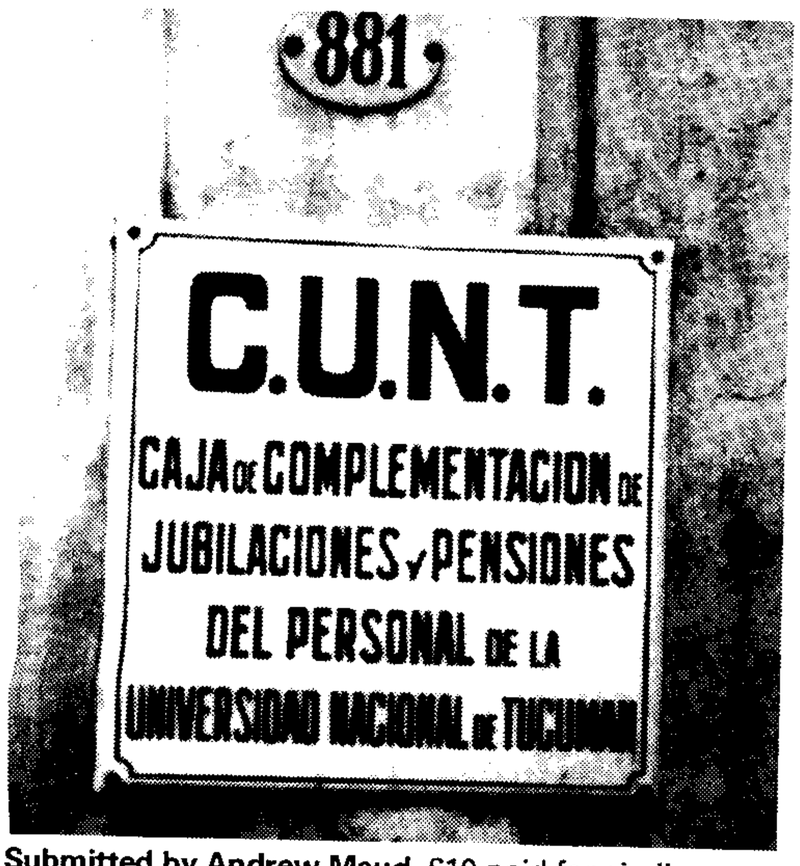
*"England's greatest composer": not Henry Purcell (*EYE *811) but William Byrd, born 450 years ago exactly.*

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD TURBET,

Bridge of Don, Aberdeen.

I-SPY

Tucoman, Argentina



Submitted by Andrew Maud. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Fishing

Sir,

Inn EYE *811, Old Muckspreader is quite right to note the continuing decline in numbers of "farming folk". I have recently completed working three DTI research-grant sponsored years for an aquacultural company, and I am now unemployed. I have ten years' fish farming experiences, a biological degree and I am a Nuffield farming scholar to boot. Please do print this letter complete to try to prevent me from drowning! Remember my long subscription! Thank you.*

Prospective employers please telephone: 0665-710796.

Yours ambitiously,
BRIAN JOHNSON,

Morpeth, Northumberland.

Copy boy

Sir,

I would point out that the true circulation figure of the SUNDAY EXPRESS *on 19 May 1991 when Eve Pollard joined was 1,627,000 and not 1,668,000 which you quote in your statement. The figure on 22 November was 1,664,000 and not 1,647,000 as you stated. This gives the title an increase of 37,000 and not the 12,000 you referred to.*

The figures for 20 December and 27 December were correct, however, the increase in sale on 27 December of 1.8 percent was, in a market that fell seasonally by 244,000 copies, a decrease of 1.6 percent.

The figure for 3 January was incorrect, in fact it was 1,681,000, this is not a decrease of 2,000 copies in comparison to the week Eve Pollard joined, it is in fact an increase of 54,000 copies.

Yours sincerely,
D.S. GRAY,

Circulation and Marketing Director, Sunday Express, SE1.

Cracked

Sir,

Hmmm, methinks Square Eyes doth protest too much (EYE *811), to coin a phrase. Dave Allen is still one of the best comedians around. As for Allen keeping his act fresh, there was a plethora of jokes about the royals, John Major, toe sucking etc, in the first of the shows in the series on 7 January. In fact, the sort of gags that are cracked in your esteemed organ.*

Yours,
JOHN SEAGER,

London N7.

Pierced

Sir,

When a once-radical magazine advocates neo-Georgian architecture to represent modern Britain at an international exhibition, it's time to quit. Thanks to Piloti's now terminal conservatism, EYE *810 marks the end of a 17-year collection.*

Yours, until now, faithfully,
A.N. PIERCE-JONES,

Farnham, Surrey.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

David Glencourse: *We're now going over to talk to an eye-witness — tell me, what did you see?*

Eyewitness: *Nothing really — I ran down Regent Street.*

Glencourse: *Well, what can you see now?*

Eyewitness: *Eros — I'm at Piccadilly Circus!*

SKY NEWS coverage of Oxford Street explosions
(Jeff Leviss)

"As I've said before and I said yesterday, this is one of the key questions which will be decided or not decided at Edinburgh."

DOUGLAS HURD MP, BBC
(Tom Cook)

"It wouldn't be a surprise to see Marseilles play a rough game, but it would be surprising if they did."

CHRIS WADDLE, Radio 4
(C.M. Morris)

"And what shape, then, is the Rubik's Cube?"

PETER SISSONS, BBC
(Stuart Nally)

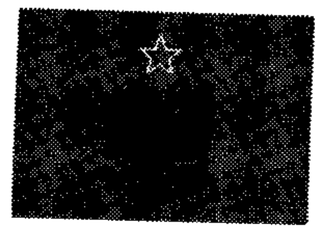
"Anybody in their right mind who doesn't ask you needs his head examined."

SEAN RAFFERTY, BBC Radio Ulster
(C.D.C. Armstrong)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN

Letter from Tirana



from Our Own Correspondent

NEXT to North Korea, and a brief period of Maoist zealotry in China, Albania suffered a communism that was more grotesque, bizarre and unbelievable than anything you can imagine.

We had our own "great helmsman", as Mao was known, our own "great leader" as Kim Il Sun still is. We had Enver Hoxha: a sexually ambiguous, baby-faced tyrant who bestrode our country, as well as any young communist — male or female — who needed educating on the Albanian road to socialism.

But we also had our own Madame Mao — 74-year-old Nexjmie — who is currently on trial facing incarceration for the rest of her unnatural life. Our very own black widow, and definitely the deadlier of the Hoxha species, Nexjmie has spent more than a year in one of the dank dungeons her husband built for anyone insane enough to be alienated from his people's paradise.

The new authorities would have been happy to let her rot there until death did they part, but Amnesty International pointed out that in modern Europe you really had to bring charges first. The government's next plan was to hold a nationwide referendum on her guilt or innocence. But then Amnesty mentioned something about "due process", not hitherto mentioned in the Albanian legal textbook.

The attorney-general got uppity about the new authorities' distinct similarities to the *ancien regime* and was promptly sacked. But good sense has prevailed and charges have been brought. Unfortunately they have had to be scaled down somewhat: from "genocide" to "abusing state property" to the tune of $240! That should be good for 100 hours' community service or even probation.

The trial was intended to be part of a diversion from the unbelievable economic gloom and civil strife here. A witchhunt of ex-communist leaders seemed like a good idea — but a measure of the incompetent venality of our current "Democratic Party" rulers is that last summer the communists — now the Socialist Party — bounced back to 42 percent of the vote, seizing back control of most of the towns and cities and creating in Leninspeak "dual power" in the country.

In any case *all* the politicians are ex-communists. Our president Sali Berisha (a born-again Muslim) was Enver's doctor; our ex-prime minister, sacked recently by Berisha, Gramos Pashko, was a lecturer in Marxism-Leninism; and the Democrats' chairman, Edouard Salami, wrote a book in 1989 entitled *The Aesthetics of Enver Hoxha Thought.*

And the government's ludicrous vendetta against ex-president Ramiz Alia — the country's Gorbachev who organised the elections which brought the Democrats to power and who thus avoided civil war in this, the country of the blood feud, where one can be murdered for a slight committed 20 years ago — has deepened their crisis.

They have Alia banged up under house arrest. He lives with a family of five in a damp two-bedroomed flat, with heavily armed soldiers lining the tenement walls. The problem is he's in his late sixties, suffering from heart problems and they can't even pin a $240 rap on him!

Hoxha completely gutted the Albanian economy, reducing a country of just three million people with oil, gas, nickel, abundant hydro-power, fertile land and the most beautiful mountains and beaches in Europe, to a state of Central African-style penury. But under the Democrats the economy has left intensive care for the mortuary.

Around 60 percent of Tirana has been without electricity for most of the last six weeks. Regular, total power cuts are the norm throughout the land. Water, in this land of gushing waterfalls, is rationed to three times daily, people filling receptacles at 3am to last them until mid-afternoon. Every fellable tree has been burned; there is no kerosene; and people are literally freezing to death.

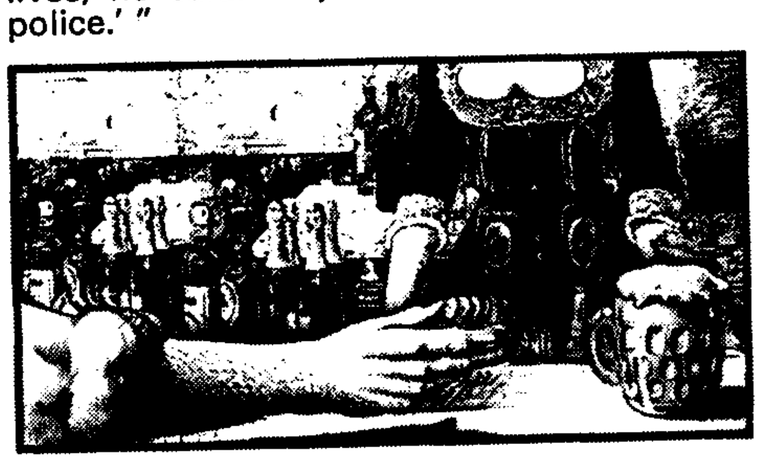
Anyone with legs has fled to Italy or Germany. There is a chronic absence of young males, and young girls now prostitute themselves outside the Daijte Hotel for £3 — the lowest priced sex in Europe. Not that that's enough to entice many tourists: the hotels are too cold and bare to attract more than the most intrepid. And don't worry if you haven't yet met an Albanian. We're all coming your way, soon.

TRUE STORIES

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

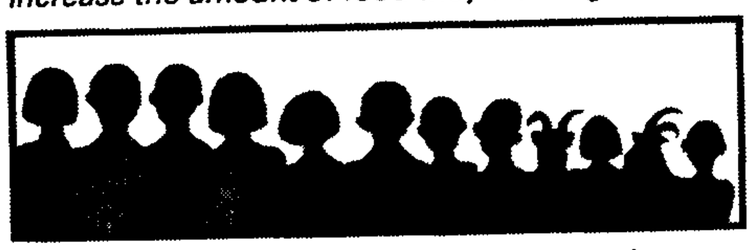
Illuminated by BERT KITCHEN

AS PART of her statement to the Hospital Reform Committee, Mrs Jamieson Appoo said: "On the night I was admitted after my heart attack, screens were erected around the bed next to mine and moments later sounds of passionate lovemaking could he heard all through the intensive care unit. One patient began to cry out that this was disgusting as people were dying nearby. But it made no difference; the heaving and grunting went on for about an hour. Then it stopped. The lights went off and when they came back on everything had been cleared away. When I reported the matter to Dr Rene Deeva, he said it happened all the time and I was to 'take it in my stride'. When I told him that it was wicked for such practices to be performed while our noble nurses and doctors were battling to save lives, he said: 'If you don't like it, tell the police.' "



DECIDING that the phrase "legitimate games and pastimes" excluded the plaintiff's claim, Judge James said: "Mr Kirkiss is a Bungee Dasher. That is to say, he fixes an elastic rope to his trouser belt and then makes a dash from one end of the public bar in an effort to seize the pint of beer that is standing on a table at the barroom's far end. On this occasion Mr Kirkiss was "dashing" in the Owl, Waynfleet, when the elastic rope broke from its housing and contracted at speed onto his backside, knocking him over the table and headfirst into the bar where he lay stunned."

AFTER she had been questioned by the police, Mrs Mary Zarira admitted that because her husband, Luasa, had threatened to beat her if she did not follow his orders she had registered her two goats, Micky and Muddy, as members of her family in order to increase the amount of food they would get under



the drought relief scheme. "It was my cousin, Camco, who betrayed me," she said. "He saw that I had registered 12 children but knew that I only had 10. When Luasa found out what had happened, he beat me and then ran away."

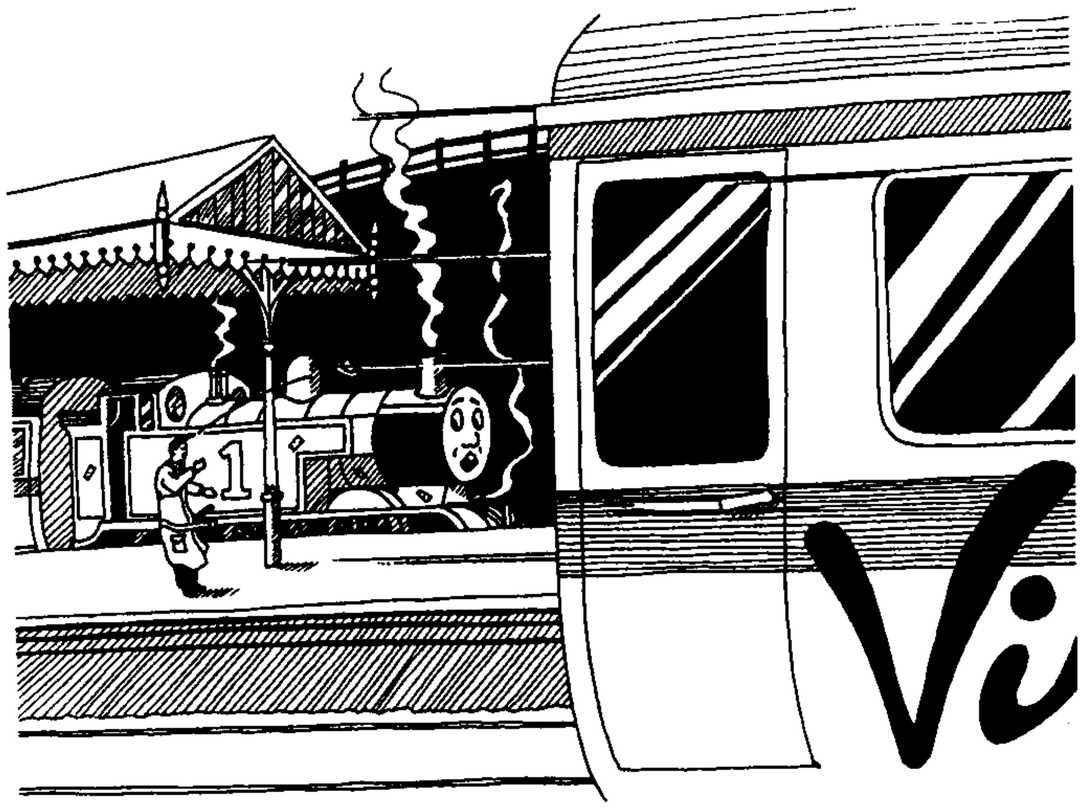
ADMITTING that he had "gone a little too far", Colonel Jose Castalan, Chief of the Marcana Stadium's Security Patrol, said: "Our all-seater stadium holds 170,000, so we keep a firm hand. Last week, during the Americas Supercup match between Brazil and Argentina, one section of the crowd began to throw dead cats and balloons of urine on to the pitch. So I gave the word and my lads moved in and arrested 4,000 people for smoking marijuana. Each one had to pay £10 to get out of the cage. We did very well out of it. The rest will go to trial and have been advised by their lawyers to plead guilty."

INFORMATION; Seychelles Weekly 24.12.92; Western Mail 19.12.92; Harare Herald 11.9.92; Kingstown Press 12.12.92. MONITORS: Dr Peter Rowan, T. Jones Borth, P. Horsman, Nicholas Kilsby.

THOMAS

THE PRIVATISED TANK ENGINE

Thomas and the Advertised Connection



GORDON the Virgin engine was travelling very fast as he approached the big station one morning.

"Steady on!" yelled Thomas from his branch-line platform.

"We're going too fast! We're going too fast," shouted Gordon's carriages.

And Gordon rushed through the station in a flash of gleaming white paint.

Thomas's passengers, who caught Gordon's train into the big city every morning, were very angry. They summoned the Fat Controller.

"Gordon does not stop here any more," he explained.

"But why ever not?" they cried.

"This stop is unremunerative. Cutting it out means Gordon can get to the big city three minutes quicker."

"Then how are we to get there every morning?"

"Turn right out of the station and a hundred yards on your left you'll find the Nissan car showroom. Thank you," he said, and disappeared into his office.

THOMAS'S train was empty next day, and at dusk the Grey Controller visited Thomas at his engine shed.

"I'm very considerably annoyed with you," he said, shaking his head. "Your train was empty this morning."

"That's because the Bearded Controller has forbidden Gordon to stop at the big station."

"Clearly there's no demand for your service," continued the Grey Controller, ignoring Thomas.

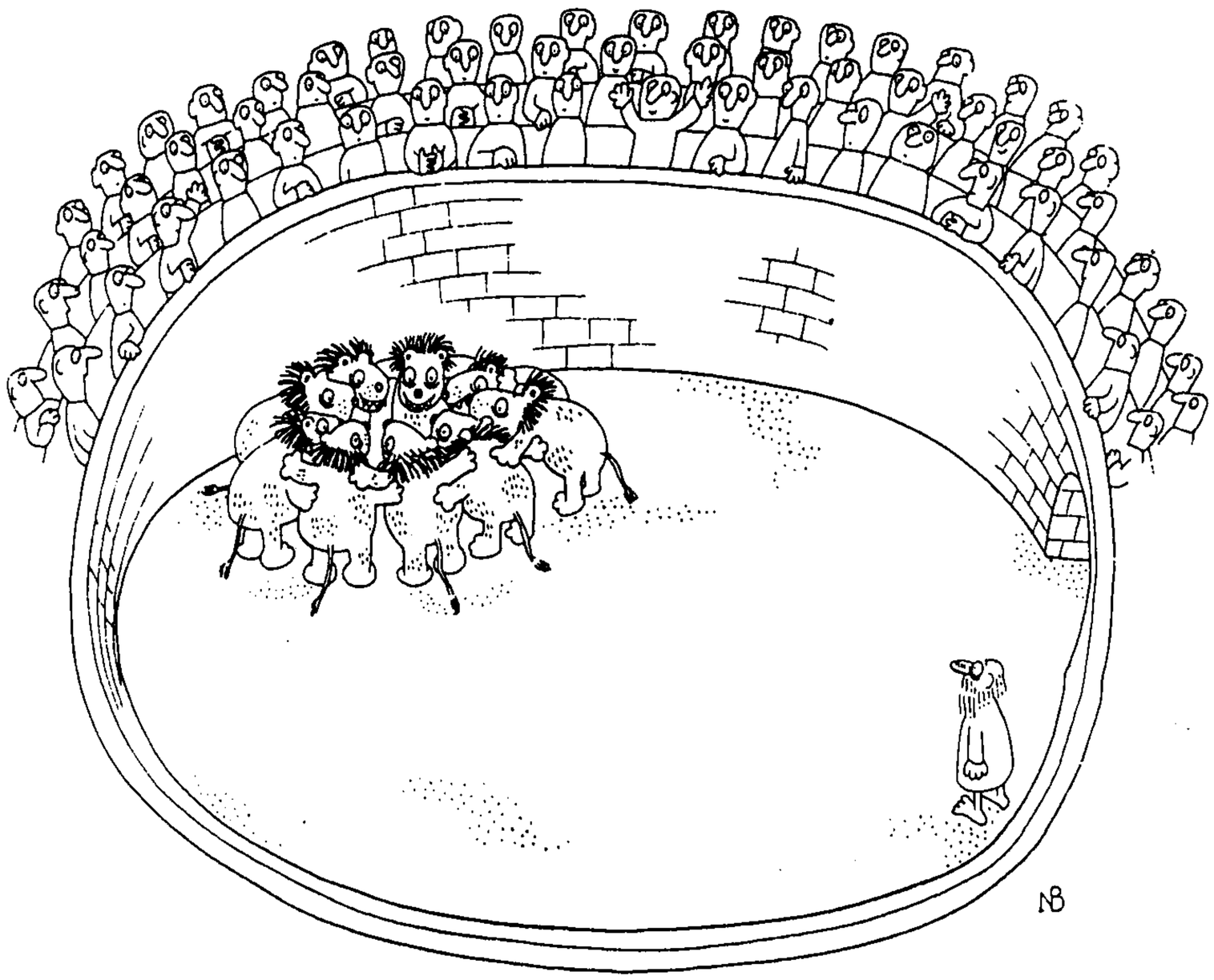
"That's ridiculous. My branch line serves a catchment area of one hundred and fifty thousand people," protested Thomas.

"I shall not let you burden the taxpayer like this. I shall put a stop to this very bad situation, oh yes."

Thomas brightened at these words.

"Oh thank you, sir. I'm so glad you're going to make the Bearded Controller serve the population as well as his shareholders. I mean, what right has he to deprive ordinary folk of their train to work?"

"The Bearded Controller is a very rich man," said the Grey Controller. "And you, Thomas, are unemployed. Your branch line is closed as from tomorrow."



The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

We are at war! I know this because *Mr Bush* left a message on my answering machine while I was asleep — *or rather* his secretary did. Apparently he has launched hundreds of missiles at hotels in Iraq, hoping that Mr Saddam is staying at one of them. The historic message said in full: "The President wants you to know that he is kicking butt and that if anyone asks you, you are 100% behind him." I wonder how he knew that, because that is also what it said in the Daily Telegraph this morning.

Tuesday

We are at war again, this time in Bosnia. Two wars at once! That is more than Mrs Thatcher ever achieved. Oh yes. You would think everyone would support me. But oh no. This afternoon in the House of Commons Mr Smith of the Labour Party asked a lot of silly questions about Mr Lamont and his legal bills. I immediately stood up with my new 1993 ring-folder and replied in my firmest wartime-leader voice: "How dare you ask questions about this sort of thing when our boys are risking their lives in Bosnia?" Everybody cheered. Then there were some more questions about railway privatisation and unemployment, and I gave the same answer. Everyone cheered again. It was certainly a successful afternoon!

Wednesday

Sir Norma Fowler, who is now the Party Chairman, came in this morning and said: "Prime Minister, you were so wonderful in the House of Commons yesterday that we have decided to make a film about you for one of our *party political* broadcasts." This was exactly the sort of imaginative *thinking* I was hoping for when I gave him the job! Apparently they want to begin with film of me shaking hands with our boys on the front line in Bosnia. And then I will be seen sitting at my desk arranging my biros in a purposeful manner.

"The link," said Sir Norma, "is that our soldiers are doing a brilliant and difficult job for their country, and so are you."

I at once realised that this was in no small measure an inspired way to put across our message.

"By the way," I said, "what is our message?"

"That everything is going terrifically well," Sir Norma replied. "Is it?" I said. "I am delighted to hear it. I must tell the Cabinet. They will be very pleased."

Thursday

This morning I could not wait to tell the Cabinet the good news that everything is going terrifically well. For some reason Mr Waldegrave, who was bringing in the tea, burst into such happy laughter that he dropped the tray. But there was more good news to come!

Mrs Bottomley told us that she had single-handedly managed to save Bart's Hospital. It seems that some people had been trying to close it down. "Any private beds for us?" said Mr Lamont, putting his arms round the Health Secretary in a rather embarrassing manner. I'm afraid poor Norma has been under a lot of strain recently, according to Sir Robin Butler, who takes the minutes at our meetings.

"Do leave Virginia alone," I told Mr Lamont in my special primus inter pares voice (this is a very useful Latin phrase which Sir Robin learned at Oxford and apparently means that whatever I say goes). Then Mr Heseltine said that he also had some good news. He had single-handedly managed to save the jobs of 20,000 coal miners. We all agreed that this was another great achievement for this Government.

Friday

It is another very historic day. My friend Mr Bush is to be replaced by the man who will be my new friend, Mr Clinton. I thought that I had better ring him up to congratulate him, so I dialled the special number on the hot-line.

"Hullo," I said, "this is John Major. Can I please speak to President Clinton?"

There was a clicking noise and a recorded voice said: "President and Mrs Clinton thank you for calling to offer your congratulations on this historic day of their inauguration. God bless America. Have a nice day."

It is good to know that I can still get straight through to the Oval Office on the hot-line, and I am sure that in a few days time Mr Clinton will be less busy, and will have time to talk to me.

He seems very nice, but he must remember that it is very easy, when you have just won an election, to go

round making lots of promises and getting people to like you. However he should remember that public opinion can change very quickly. Look what happened to Mrs Thatcher.

Saturday

Mr O'Donnell tells me I am going to India. This must be because the cricket is about to start. Poor Mr Gooch is in trouble and everyone has turned against him. They say he cannot keep control of his team. I will have to give him a few tips.

Before I left, Mr Heseltine rang up to tell me not to worry about going away for six days. He said he had everything under control. Then Mrs Shepherd rang up to say it was quite all right to go as she would keep Mr Heseltine under control. Finally Norma Lamont phoned in on a mobile phone, saying he would fix "that basket Clarke" while I was away. The line was very crackly and there was the noise of bottles clinking in the background. In fact I thought I heard someone asking if he would like to pay by cash or credit card, but the line went dead. Finally Mr Hurd rang up and told me to enjoy the cricket and stay as long as I wanted.

If only Mr Gooch had a loyal team like that he would win every game.

Sunday

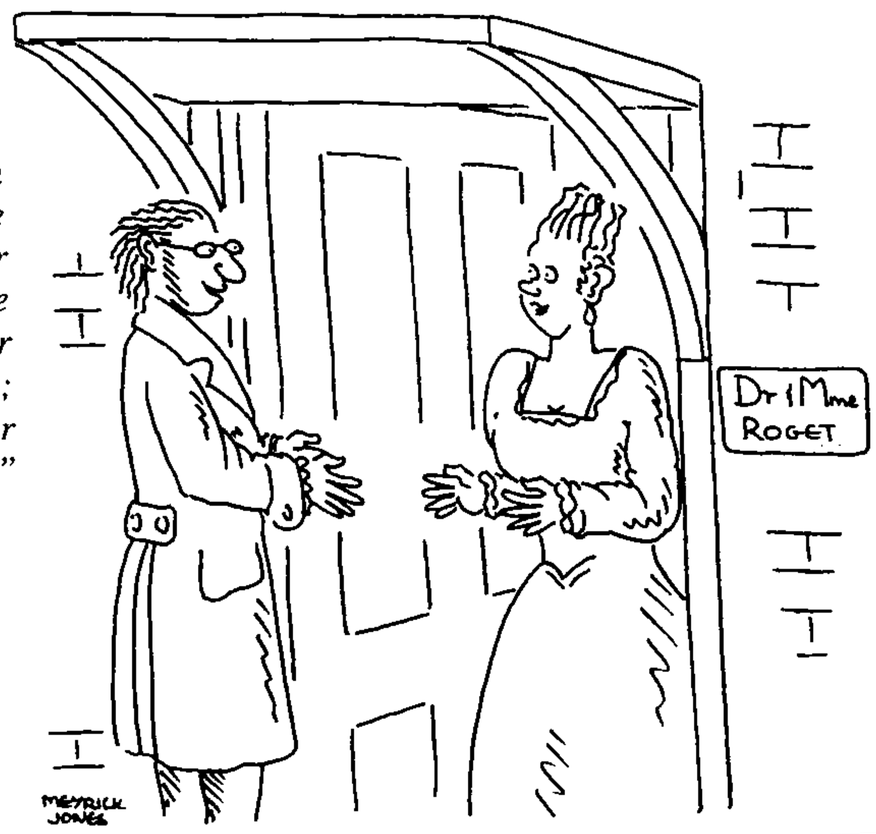
I am in India, which is a very hot place indeed. My wife Norman could not come with me. She said she would only feel sick. Certainly the food is not inconsiderably spicy. Oh yes!

There is a lot of trouble here and there are two sides. One is called the Hindus and the other is called the Muslims. And another is called the Sikhs. It is very serious indeed and may even disrupt the cricket. I have offered to mediate but the Indian Prime Minister told me: "Things are not *that* bad."

Monday

The cricket is still on, which is very encouraging. Also Mr Heseltine has sent me a fax. It says: "Dear John. All going well. We have kept unemployment down to three million."

This is a considerable achievement, and one, incidentally, which Mrs Thatcher never managed.



"Hi, honey, I'm home; I've returned to our dwelling; come back to our residence; arrived at our domicile"

THE Sun EXCLUSIVE

20 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL MAN

1. William Eastwood Clinton was born in the town of Hopeless, Arkansas, on 21 September 1959.

2. When at Oxford the future President played the saxophone in a jazz band called The Draft Dodgers.

3. He has a daughter called Kensington.

4. His wife Hillary can't even spell her own name.

5. Mrs Clinton accompanies her husband everywhere, even to the toilet.

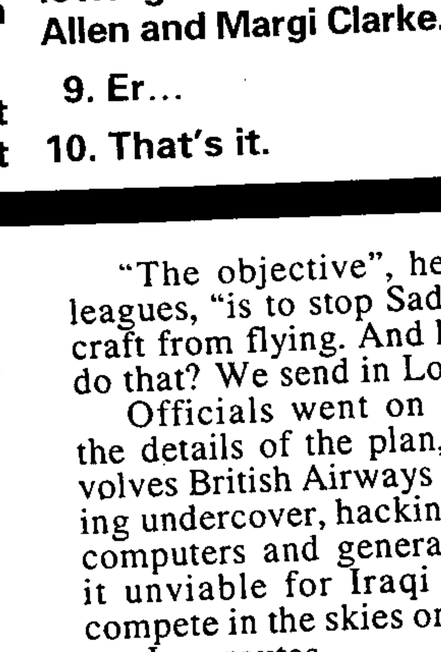
6. It has been alleged that the President once had an affair with someone called Gennifer, another woman who can't spell her own name.

7. The new President seems to have a thing about women who can't spell their own names.

8. When in London he would like to meet the following: Jaci Stephen, Jani Allen and Margi Clarke.

9. Er...

10. That's it.



Shome mishtake — surely Clinton?

Your American Football queries answered

with Old Gridiron

Q: As this year's American Superbowl reaches its climax, what I would like to know is why is there no cricket on BBC or ITV, just American Football, which I hate? What's more, so does my friend Jamie and all the other people in my year.

Christopher Barkworth
The Remove
St Cake's

Old Grid writes: *Well spotted, son! You got to keep them peepers skimmed when you're focusin' on the Big League! The way I saw it, Ivan "The Tomahawk" Rusbridger, the 883lb smartbomber from the Washington Whitehousers definitely stole three cruise ploys during the offensive strike period and was way off target when he dropped his payload on the 32nd Parallel just outside the designated Hit Zone. No wonder the coach called him back to base and replaced him with 999lb Jo "Kittyhawk" Pasternak.*

Q: I agree with my friend Christopher about the appalling lack of coverage of the Test Match against India. All sorts of minority sports seem to be represented on the broadcasting networks but there is apparently no room for our national game — cricket.

Jamie Chenton-Mendip
The Remove (B)
St Cake's

Old Grid writes: *The record number of low-level missions by a triple scudbreaker acting in a defensive role was back in Superbowl 90/91 when George "The Lipreader" Bushwhacker fed out a two-hundred gridstormer to possibly the greatest pigskin hero ever to pull on the famous khaki shirt of the Pentagon Pounders, Norm "The Autobiography" Schwarzenegger.*

(That's enough American Football. Ed.)

NO-FLY ZONE — SOLUTION FOUND

by Our Aviation Staff
Virginia Atlantic

THE GOVERNMENT has suggested a radical new approach to the Southern Iraq "No-Fly Zone crisis" which has been greeted with enthusiasm by Allied Command.

At an emergency meeting of the War Cabinet, Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind unveiled a surprise plan to ground Iraqi planes for good.

"The objective", he told colleagues, "is to stop Saddam's aircraft from flying. And how do we do that? We send in Lord King."

Officials went on to explain the details of the plan, which involves British Airways staff working undercover, hacking into Iraqi computers and generally making it unviable for Iraqi aircraft to compete in the skies on the Southern Iraq routes.

In Baghdad, officials have complained to the United Nations: "This is unfair. We are a small, evil dictatorship. We cannot hope to win against a man like Lord King."

Lord King denied involvement in any dirty tricks operation: "Anyone who suggests I know anything about what's happening will be upgraded from Economy to Concorde Business VIP Class immediately with a stop-over in Disneyworld and £1,000 spending money."

MYSTERY DEEPENS OVER 'MR WHIPROUND'

by Our Missing Persons Staff
Lord Lucan

THE MYSTERY over the disappearance of the man they call "Mr Whiproud" deepened last night, when a Ministerial Daimler — registration number CON 1 — was found abandoned at the top of Beachy Head, the well-known Sussex beauty spot.

In the back of the car were a number of red boxes, a sheaf of unpaid Access bills and three empty claret bottles sticking out of a bag labelled "Thrasher's of Praed Street".

Thrashergate

Norman Lamont, known as "Mr Whiproud", was known to have received large sums of money from rich Conservative businessmen whose names have never been revealed.

In recent days, friends say he was "very worried" about financial problems, including one debt of £44 billion that he did not know how to repay.

"I can hear Prince Charles"

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

ZZZZZZ
HANSARD

The Evidence of Sir Kelvin Mackenzie to the Commons Select Committee on Privacy in the Media

Gyles Brandnew (Pullover, Con): May I begin by asking you, Mr Mackenzie, how you see your role?

Kelvin Mackenzie: My newspaper represents millions of ordinary people wot want to know wot's going on wiv the nobs and the royals an' that an' they want to 'ave a bit of a larf in the mornings. Wot's wrong wiv that?

Gyles Brandnew: Thank you very much indeed.

Joe Washedup (Ee-by-Gumme, Lab): Ordinary folk like me 'appen as 'ad enough of thy paper with its invasion into t'lives of ordinary old-age pensioners like me.

Macfilth: Come off it, mate! Look 'oo's talking! You used to write a load of bollocks in the *Daily Star* yourself! 'Ere, I've got photocopies if you want a look.

Ashenface: Thank you very much indeed.

Sir Gerald Kaufperson (Oklahoma! Lab): Many people regard your newspaper with utter contempt. How would you like it if photographers came to your house and tried to...

Kelvin McBlackmail: Look matey I've got the goods on you so you'd better wind yer neck in or you'll be on the front page! And you know what the headline will be, don't you, sweetie-pie?

Kaufperson: I see. Thank you very much.

McBlackmail: All you lot want me to do is shut up abaht wot you're up to. I know everything about every one of you!! *(Points finger round room)*

All: Thank you.

McBlackmail: But I'm no respecter of persons, no way. The rich an' powerful don't put the wind up me. I don't suck up to no one. *(Portable phone rings)* Hello, Mr Murdoch, sir. It's going fine. Yes, sir, yes, sir. Amen, sir. God bless Your Majesty and long live Your Holiness. *(Continues for several hours)*

ADVERTISEMENT

SPY LIFE

Edited by Bill Davies

Magazine of British Airways — The World's Most Dishonest Airline

In this month's issue

"Why your Virgin plane will crash" by Sheridan Morley p.3

"Good Riddance to DanAir" writes Libby Purves p.7

"Sir Tim Bell — Genius and Saviour of BA." Profile by Frank Muir p.9

"Amnesia — A terrible problem for top executives" by Lord King p.11

"We'll take good care of Branson"

BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ

No. 11
WOR CHAZZA'S GERRIN' IN THE PAPERS EVERY DAY!
GLADYS GATE TAPE
I THOUGHT HE WANTED TA GERRIN MONTHLY! FNARR FNARR!
THAT REALLY IS SICK!
AYE, PET! BOWLES OF IT!
GLADYS GATE TAPE
FATHA! IT SAYS HERE "PUNCH THE TIT"!
ALREET!
WHACK!
WHOOSH!
EURH! HOY US YER ALDISS LAMP - I NEED TA TALK TA WOR GLADYS - PRIVATE, LIKE!
THROB!
WHY DIVVENT YER JUS' FAX HER? FNARR!!

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Sammy Cahn, Songwriter

So. Farewell
Then
Sammy
Cahn.

When asked
What came first —
The words
Or the music
You said

"The phone
Call."

Now God
Has called
To say

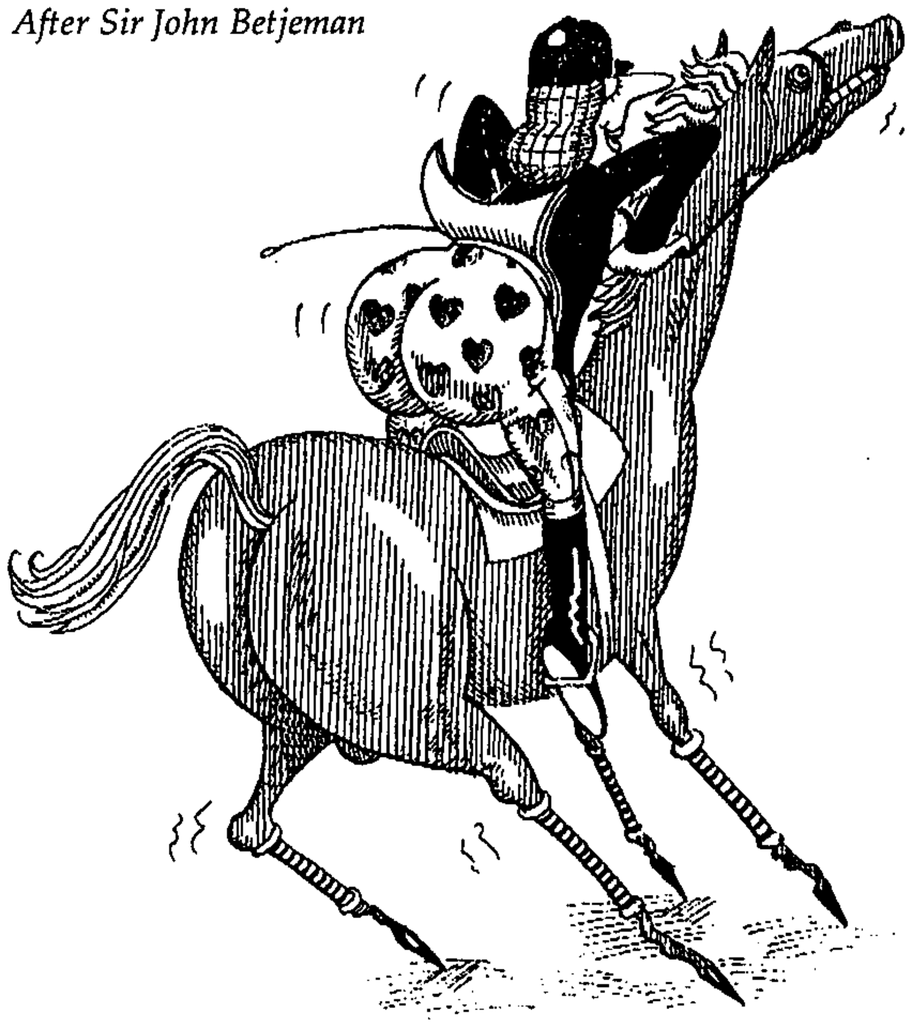
"Come Fly
With Me"

Like in
Your song.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

Benny on Sammy *(continued from page 94)* and in his 1933 masterpiece *Mr Kabooza Takes A Snooza* his mastery of the internal rhyme was already evident, *writes Benny Green*. The lines "I've got a baby called Barbara and she's sent me a candelabra" illustrate perfectly how he had already outgrown the early influences of Monty Yipstein and Sam Missileburger. For a short while he turned his attention to Broadway, where he co-penned three shows with K.Y. "Jelly" Bean — *Raindrops in Oklahoma, Me And My Dog* and *Hello Honey, I'm Home*. These alas proved that his talent was more for the one-off song and none lasted more than a few weeks. His collaboration with singer Salvatore Riina *(continued page 94)*

After Sir John Betjeman



Mrs C. Parker-Bowles, Mrs C. Parker-Bowles,
One thrills to the sined of your horse-and-hind vowels.
But, oh! when those trizers go taut as you ride,
One feels an arisal sort of thingy inside.

N.B.

NEW WORDS

with Philip Howard

CLINTON
n. N. American slang. Third-rate musician, esp. saxophonists. Example: "We've got a real clinton on tenor tonight." (From *The Official Life Of The Duke Of Ellington*, p. 768.)

BIRT
n. Bureaucratic jargon, corporate nonsense, meaningless verbiage, drivel. Example: "That man in glasses is talking absolute birt."

FORGAN
n. Successful career woman with talent for listening to birt. Example: "She'll get the job all right — she's a forgan." (From *BBC Handbook*, 1993.)

SOUNESS
adj. Scots dialect. Hopeless, useless, unfitted for job. Example: "a souness loon, mak' nae mistake." (R. Burns.)

HONECKER
v.i. Low German: to make miraculous recovery from fatal illness, shortly after having court charges dropped as a result of the same illness. *(English equivalents — Saunders, Seeling, Lyons.)* Example: "I've never seen anyone honecker like it. He just saundered out of court."

LAMONT New gift shock

by Our Political Staff
Michael Whitewash

MR NORMAN Lamont was at the centre of a new scandal yesterday with the suggestion that he was in possession of an undeclared gift.

"He has no gifts whatsoever," said John Major. "I am standing by him because he makes me look quite competent."

Other supporters were quick to agree. "He's the most ungifted Chancellor we've ever had," said one loyal Treasury official, "and any suggestion to the contrary is a lie."

Big Bribe

Conservative backbenchers closed ranks around the beleaguered Chancellor as fresh allegations about an alleged "wealth of talent" began to circulate around Westminster.

Mr Lamont even felt obliged to defend himself from these attacks. "The only gift I've ever had", he said, "is an amazing ability to cock everything up. Anyone who says otherwise can expect a writ — to be paid for by the taxpayer in association with various anonymous Conservative businessmen."

Norman Lamont is £18,000 richer.

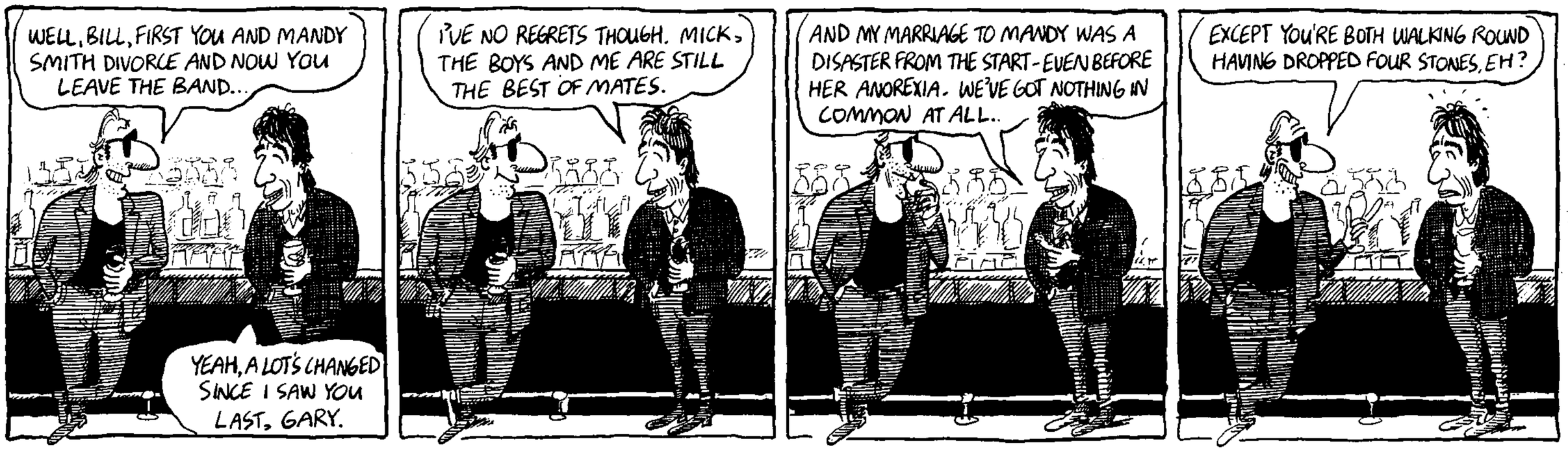
FOR THE BRIDE

PERSONAL ATTACK ALARM Feel Safe, the very best in personal protection. No salesman, no pressure, just the latest technology at prices you'll find hard to beat. For free information call — M. A. Holdings 0623 632681.

Nottingham Evening Post

Celeb

LIGGER


WELL, BILL, FIRST YOU AND MANDY SMITH DIVORCE AND NOW YOU LEAVE THE BAND...
YEAH, A LOT'S CHANGED SINCE I SAW YOU LAST, GARY.
I'VE NO REGRETS THOUGH. MICK, THE BOYS AND ME ARE STILL THE BEST OF MATES.
AND MY MARRIAGE TO MANDY WAS A DISASTER FROM THE START - EVEN BEFORE HER ANOREXIA. WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON AT ALL..
EXCEPT YOU'RE BOTH WALKING ROUND HAVING DROPPED FOUR STONES, EH?

New Dirre Playe
OH CALCUTT!
by Mafter Ken Tyburn

Ye Dailie Nelliegraph

Prop: Sir Conradde de Blackaddere
Edited by My Lord Haftings at Ye Signe of Ye Canarie

New from ye Colonie/!
Ye Potatoe!
Spud-You-Will-Like
Founded by ye
Sir Walter Raleigh

Nelliegate Lateft

Charlef's Miftrefs

Ye Senfational Truth!

By Our Court Correfpondent Mafter J. Aubrey-Waugh

YE COURT hath beene rocked to itf very foundationf by ye cominge to light of ye privy converfation of Hif Majefty King Charles, ye fo-called "Merrie Monarche", and hif "friend" Miftrefs Nell Gwynne, 23, ye orange-feller of Drurie Lane.

Expertf were laft night claiming that there can be "no difputing" ye verifimilitude of ye converfationf copied down through ye Royal keyhole by ye cele-brated diarift Mafter Samuel Peeping-Tom.

Ye Dailie Nelliegraph taketh no pleafure in ye difcomfiture of Hif Majeftie in thif miferable bufinefs.

Ye King's fubjects will be difmayed by thefe difclofures pertaining to the moft intimate matterf concerning Hif Majeftie's perfon.

We believe that af a rule fuch matterf are no bufinefs of ye common people, and whatever Hif Majeftie getteth up to in the privacy of hif own bedchamber or clofet if, i'faith, hif own affair.

However, in thif cafe, we believe that ye publick hath ye right to know what all ye fufs if about and to make judgement for themfelvef on ye rightf and ye wrongf of thif unfavoury matter. *(Gette on with ye fmutty tittle-tattle quoth Ye Editor.)*

CHARLES: Hither, wench, I would fain taketh my fport with ye.

MIFTREFS GWYNNE: Oh, ye are a one, Your Majeftie!

CHARLES: Indeed we are!

MIFTREFS NELL: Thou art indeed, my graciouf Lorde, moft comely, moft wittie and moft cheekie, withal!

CHARLES: Come clofer, Nell, that I may fqueeze thy orangef!

NELL: *(inaudible)*

CHARLES: If they be not orangef, fweet Nell, then by my faith — which incidentally I am ye Defender of — they are a right pair! Get ye it? *(aside)* Ye get it often enough, anyway!

NELL: Your Majeftie, ye are a veritable wit and faucie with it. Will ye not reade to me from thy lateft fpeeche on ye rebuilding of ye Citie of London after Ye Greate Fire?

CHARLES: Marry, I am exceeding concerned about ye new-looke St Paul'f. Thefe moderne architectef like Fir Chriftopher Wren really are appalling!

NELL: Indeedy-doody they are, O Mightie Monarche!

CHARLES: *(inaudible)*

NELL: Oh no, Your Majeftie! Not now! Let uf tarrie until thy wife if out of ye way at Hampton Court.

CHARLES: Yea. I will fpeake to My Lorde of Fhelburne, that he may permit uf to lodge with him the night at his feat at Bowood.

NELL: How doth one get there?

CHARLES: Straight down ye Bathe road. It taketh me onlie two dayf.

NELL: It taketh me a weeke!

CHARLES: That if becaufe ye have to walke because thou art only an humble orange feller! Ha ha ha. No, but verily, I would fain be refurrected in ye after-life af ye padding in thy placket!

NELL: Ha, ha, ha, Your Majeftie. Then ye wouldst be caftte into ye jakef, to fwirl and fwirl about!

CHARLES: Ha, ha ha. Oh dear, I fear it if time for uf to parte, for I muft refume my new fpeech on ye new fcheme for retraining ye apprenticef in ye inner citief.

NELL: Oh, my lord, farewell. How hard ye labour, to be fure.

CHARLES: Goodnight, fweet ladie.

NELL: Fare thee well, my fweet lorde.

CHARLES: Mind how ye go.

NELL: Love thee!

CHARLES: Mifsing ye already.

NELL: God be wi' ye.

CHARLES: Fweet dreams.

NELL: Love ye for aye.

CHARLES: Gadzooks! It if Mafter Pepyfat ye keyhole again. I will have to promote him to run ye Navie!

(Here Ye Converfation Cometh Abruptly To A Clofe)

On Other Pagef

Waf Ye Nelliegraph Wrong To Publifh Ye Royalle Fmutte?

YEF ☐ NOE ☐

Place Thy Marke Here and Fend To Ye Editor

Exclufive

Old Magdalen Man Appointed To Runne Navie, revealf Mafter Lettfputitinbecaufewehavenothingelfe. p.2

Why Oh Why Of The World? afks Dr Paul Johnfon. p.3

Rudolf Ye Dancing Cofsack Dief Of Ye Plague p.4

Are Bofoms Bare Enough? afks Fir Conradde Blackdeathe p.5

Unfunny Cartoon by Hogarth p.6

Caught and Circulated

HIGHGROVE

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will be calling on Mrs Camilla Parker-Bowles via his hand-held mobile telephonic device. He will open the conversation with a series of smutty innuendoes and will then continue with an informal invitation to fornicate at the home of the Earl of Shelburne. In attendance on the phone will be Duty Officer Perkins from GCHQ, Mrs Stella Rimington of MI5, and Mr Harry Trusslow, a retired bank manager from The Glades, Crawley.

KENSINGTON HOUSE

The Princess of Wales will be receiving ambassadors from the *Daily Sport*, the *Sun* and the *Sunday Times* at an official reception to raise public sympathy for her cause. She will then visit *Hello!* magazine to model her new range of swimwear.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Prince Edward will be receiving a copy of Monday's *Guardian* newspaper in his bedroom and will be examining the "Creative and Media Jobs Vacant" section before formally applying for the post of Deputy Tea Manager at the Slough Community Theatre.

That Secret MI5 MPs Lunch Meeting Menu in full

Snoop of the Day

— ❋ —

Fresh Leaks

— ❋ —

Scrambled Eggs

— ❋ —

Grilled Mullin

or

Code Fillets

— ❋ —

Steak Out (not Well Done)

or

Bugged Hare
with Shredded Vegetables and Spilt Beans

— ❋ —

Mince Spies with Cold War Custard or Double-Agent Cream

— ❋ —

To Drink

Lager: Stella Rimington
Wine: Red (Under the Bed)
Water: Tapped

— ❋ —

Undercover Charge of 10% *Surveillance not included*

"Seems like every time you go for a drink these days some idiot tries to pick a fight"

"All right, have it your way — you heard a seal crying!"

JIMHUNTER ackn. THURBER

FANS MOURN AS LAMORSE BOWS OUT

by Our Media Staff
Lunchtime O'Nanugu

MILLIONS of fans were last night mourning the final appearance of one of the most popular characters ever to feature on British television — Inspector Lamorse.

What was the extraordinary appeal of this scruffy, bibulous enigma who for years on end wandered across our screens, without any idea of what was going on?

Viewers were continually baffled by Lamorse's survival as, accompanied by his much brighter sidekick Sergeant Portillo, he grappled with such mysteries as the Missing £25 Billion, The Riddle of the ERM and The Case of the Vanishing Wine Merchant.

Lamorse was at first an unlikely popular hero — raffish, incompetent and totally unconvincing in his role as Chancellor.

And yet *(contd. p.94)*

World's Greatest Columnist joins The Times

This week *The Times* is proud to announce that the most hardhitting and controversial columnist of our time, **Alexander Chancellor**, will be contributing a hard-hitting, no-nonsense, no-holds-barred weekly column from his villa in Tuscany *(shurely 'New York'? Ed)*.

New York is an extraordinary place. Many of the buildings are very tall, and the taxis are painted yellow. But the most extraordinary thing of all is the number of people who come up to you in the street and shoot you. This happened to me the other day. I was on the corner of 48th and Columbus *(contd. 94th and 3rd)*

GNOME FILTH LINES

(in cooperation with MI5, GCHQ etc)

CAMILLA

Waiting to Hear your Dirty Jokes 0898 674732

Toilet-Talk with Miss Parker Bowels 0898 74625

I Want to Read *Your* Speeches on the Environment 0898 788324

M4/M11/M25 Traffic Update 0898 67432

COURT CIRCULAR

The Inauguration of Mrs Hillary Clinton and Her Partner President William Jefferson Airplane III

1st Jogger
The President.

2nd/3rd/4th/5th/6th/7th/8th Joggers
The Presidential Bodyguard.

1st Woman in Trousers
Mrs Hillary Clinton Madonna.

1st Child
Ms Chelsea Town-Hall.

1st Float
The Little Rock Senior High School Prom Swing Band playing a selection of hits from *Hair*.

1st Open Stretch Limo
Mr Michael Jackson, Mr Michael Mouse and Mr Kermit Frog representing "Legendary American Heroes".

1st Open Stretch Coffin
The late Mr Elvis Presley followed by a Grand Procession of Elvis Look-a-likes singing "Jailhouse Little Rock".

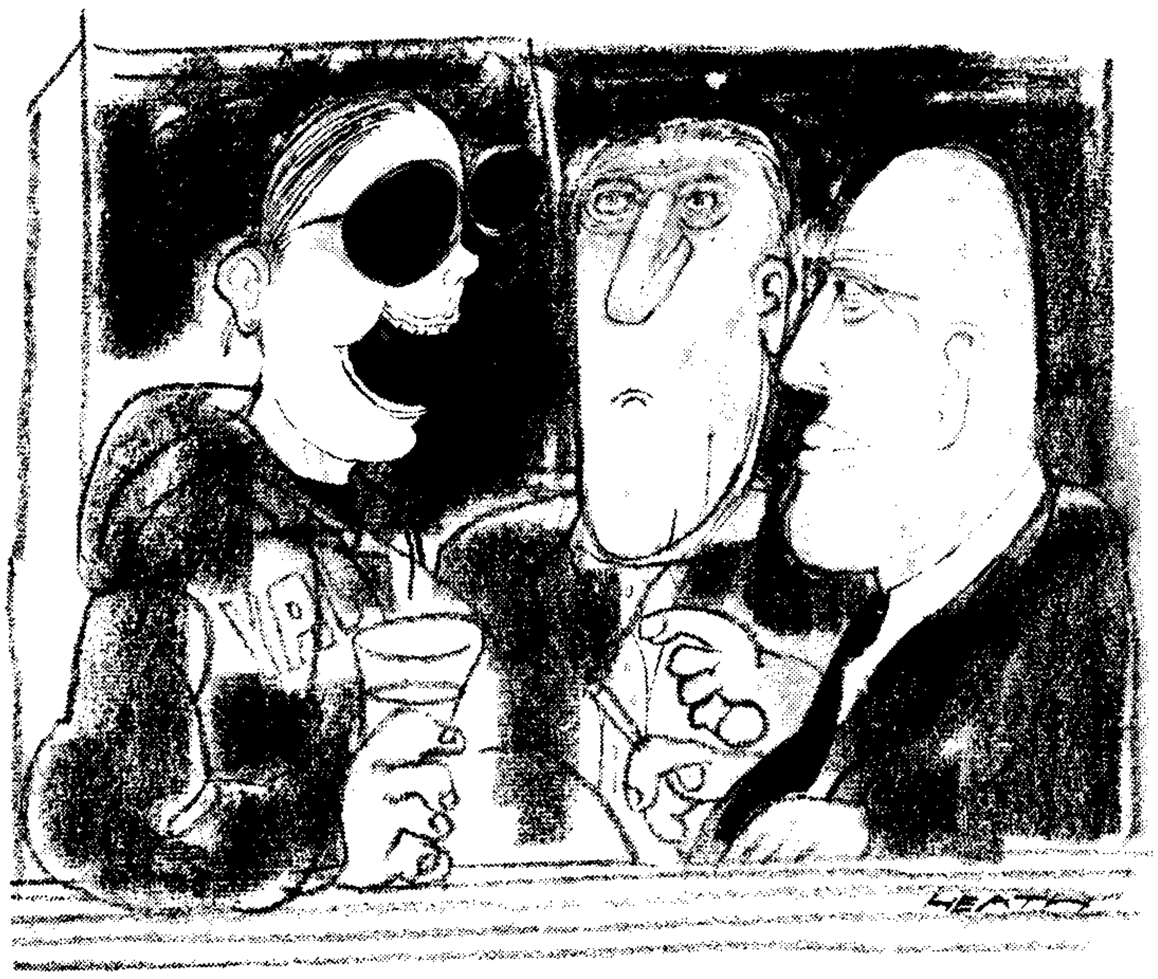
2nd Open Stretch Limo
The late President Toadthrush and Ms Rosalie-Lurleen Toadthrush.

3rd Open Stretch Limo
Mr Superman III and Ms Batperson, representing more "Legendary American Heroes".

2nd Float
Stars For Clinton, including Ms Jodie Foster, Ms Barbara Streisand, Dr Hannibal Lecter and Mr Darth Vader.

3rd Float
The Native American Community: including Chief Smoking Gun, Chief Smoking Dope, Chief Talking Bull, Chief Ansaphone and Chief Secretary to the Treasury *(surely some mistake? Ed.)*

1st Busload
Washington Afro-American Community representing the City Street Cleansing Department.
(That's enough procession. Ed.)



Great Bores Of Today.

"... I wasn't shocked myself because even when he's lying there with literally all his blood spurting out and it's sticky and you see everything it's got a sort of stylised rhythm about it and when they cut his ear off it's like a dance so you can see it's not gratuitous like I dunno some of these other films it's more detached there's this bit where this copper gets his face slashed and this nutter covers him in petrol and they're going to set fire to him and the other bloke whose stomach is hanging out blows him away you've never seen so much blood anyway other movies have violence as part of the action this one it *is* the action as *Time Out* says it's got a sort of stylised rhythm about it it's not violence for violence's sake in the scene at the end where they all shoot each other the pacing of it is symphonic it's like a dance right and the whole thing suggests futility which makes it perversely very moral in its own confines unfortunately there're no women in it..."

SEABIRD RHYMING SLANG

NEW FROM ROYAL GNOME

THE MORSE FIGURINE

NOW at last the finest craftsmen of the Meissen ceramic works have produced a beautifully sculpted hand-tooled china effigy of Britain's best-loved TV detective.

In the long winter months ahead you can ensure that Inspector Morse will *still* be on your television in exquisite detail — C&A suit, clashing blue shirt, loud tie, brown shoes, white hair.

Clutching a pint of his favourite Dexter's Old Peculiar in one hand and a CD of Mozart's *Requiem* in the other, Morse is seen in pensive mood, trying to solve the *Times* crossword. This stunningly lifelike statuette will be a treasure to pass on to your children and your children's children.

This miniature masterpiece has been designed by world leading porcelain fabricateur **Julienne Michel** from the Institut Centrale de Woodstock.

Approximate size: 8 inches.

Also available:
Sergeant Lewis, The Pathologist, The Superintendent, Detective Constable Wilkins from 'C' Division

Price: £795.99
(plays "Dit-Dit-Dit-Dit" theme tune!)

To: Royal Gnome Potteries, Unit 732, Winnall Trading Estate, Oxford

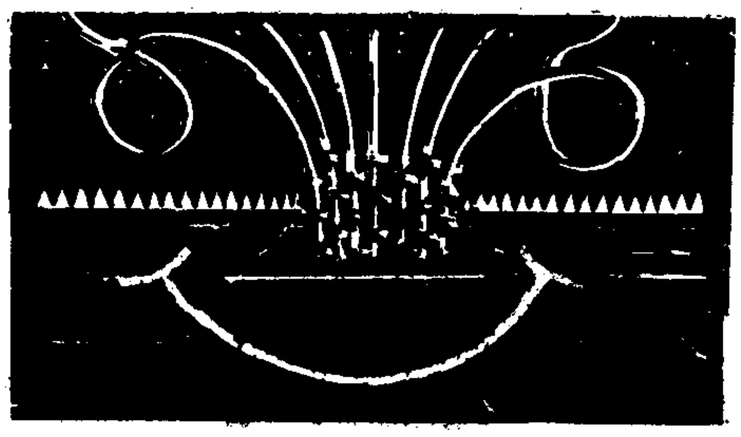
Please send me ..... Morse Figurine(s)
I am over 18 and my favourite episode is the one with the Masons (though the one in Australia was awfully good)

NAME . . . . . .

ADDRESS . . . . . .

. . . . . ***POSTCODE*** . . . . . VISA

DIARY



SIR DAVID FROST O.B.E.

It must have taken truly terrific guts for the powers-that-be to honour me with a knighthood. I humbly salute them for it. Over the past quarter of a century or more, David Frost has harassed, cajoled or coaxed highly revealing replies out of all the leading political figures of the day. With my persistent questions, I have attempted to prise the truth from Chancellors, Presidents, Party Leaders and Prime Ministers, many of whom I now proudly count among my very dearest friends. I have even, from time to time, "sent them up" something rotten, presiding satirically over hard-hitting "Caption Competitions", with tremendously amusing captions sent in by our lovely viewers.

Being subjected to "The Frost Treatment" — biting lampoon, cross-questioning and no-holds-barred comment — can't have been easy for these highly impressive world statesmen. Yet by awarding me this honour they have demonstrated the very special grace, decency and courage of the Truly Great. Gentlemen, I thank you.

Very Special Memories (1): President Bill Clinton. I have very special memories of meeting the President earlier this year when he was on the Campaign trail. He was a highly impressive performer, with a truly incredible grasp of his brief. But what I'll remember to my dying day is when he shook me by the hand at the end of that most positively gruelling interview and he said to me, "David, you're a great interviewer — and a nice, upfront, positive sorta guy." What a super bloke. Nice to have you in the White House, Bill — keep up the good work!

Lovely people often say to me, "David — you're the most famous television interviewer in the whole world, you're an accomplished satirist, a distinguished financier, a broadcasting mogul in four continents, a truly outstanding entrepreneur, a personal friend of many leading members of the Royal Family, a tireless worker for charity and, perhaps above all, an international communicator — but how do you find time for your super family?"

A fair question, m'lud! Despite my undoubted success, my family — that's my wife Lady Caroline correction Carina and my two lovely boys memo to self look up names soonest — will always come first. To play cricket on the garden lawn with my son and daughter on a lazy Saturday afternoon in the country remains the very greatest of all possible thrills for me, absolutely terrific, and it's the one thing I move heaven and earth to accomplish at least once a year, upcoming projects permitting.

When I get home, I treat my three children — two girls and a boy — as my greatest friends. "Hi! Great to see you!" I say, shaking them warmly by the hands and offering them a drink, "We really must have lunch sometime! How's your diary?"

Of course, occasionally I'm away sewing up truly exciting deals in the States for a few months, but I always take terrific care to make sure they remember exactly who I am when I get back. I have a very special hollowed-out television set which I put on whenever I return so that they know in an instant who I am. And of course they're simply thrilled, and there's a tremendous lot of excitement, a real buzz in the air, autographs all round, and all the rest of it, and then we sit down as a family and thrash out a few leisure projects for the not-too-distant future. Terrific!

Very Special Memories (2): Prime Minister John Major. I have very special memories of Prime Minister John Major, a leading figure on the world stage. Perhaps best of all I remember the time when he turned to me at the end of a show and said, "Thank you for having me on, David" and I said — completely ad-libbed — "Great thrill for all of us here!", and he replied — quick as a flash — "Can I go now?". Let no one underestimate this truly impressive performer. Nice to have you with us in Downing Street, John — keep up the good work!

I suppose I can honestly say I've interviewed all the true greats. And a great privilege it's been. John Wayne, Bob Hope, Richard Nixon, Mrs Thatcher, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Harold Wilson, Michael Caine — they've all answered questions put to them by David Frost. I'm often asked "What's your very special quality as an interviewer, David?" Hard to put a finger on, but here goes:

1) I set my guests at ease with a straightforward introductory question, tough, yes, but fair too. For instance, when my very dear friend Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont — impressive performer, incidentally — was on the show last week, my opening went: "Well, Norman we seem to be well past the worst, so that must be great news for everyone, mustn't it?" This set him at his ease, ready for the next question.

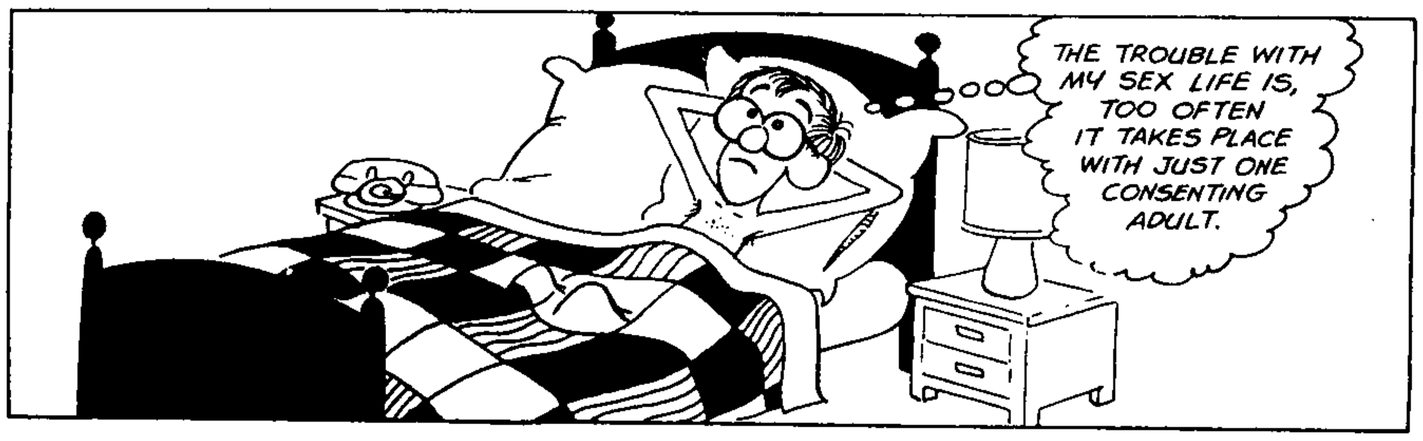
2) The second, or "follow-up", question should set the interviewee at his ease, whilst remaining razor-sharp. I often find that childhood experience carries the vital clue to a leading politician's personality, so I delve there. Thus, to Norman Lamont my "follow-up" question went: "Norman, on the subject of Black Wednesday, did you have any worse experiences than that when you were a little boy growing up all those years ago?"

3) The next questions in any major interview must set the interviewee at his ease. Aggressive, cynical questioning, so common these days, gets you nowhere. I know for certain that one major interviewer I could name has never once been invited to Number 10, and doesn't know a single Cabinet minister socially. So don't let them kid you that so-called "tough" questioning gets you places.

4) We now come to the final question, frank and to the point, designed to really put them on the spot. This final question should be asked immediately after the interview has finished, when the interviewee is completely at ease. It should go along these lines: "Terrific interview, Norman, congratulations! Now I have one further question, if you'll forgive me, and it's this. Would you and your lovely wife come to lunch at my box at Lord's? Saturday week any good? Super!"

Very Special Memories (3): President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Say what you like about Saddam, he cuts an impressive figure on the international stage, and has given some truly memorable television interviews in his time. We're hoping to feature his beautifully spacious uptown bunker on *Through the Keyhole* later this year, but until then I treasure the memory of a very special interview I had with the man just a year ago. "President," I said. "You've had your share of troubles, but you've greatly impressed your friends all over the world by your sheer determination. Tell me, looking back over the Gulf War and the Iran/Iraq War, and all your other problems, what for you has been the happiest moment, the moment when you thought, 'Gee, but it's really super and incredible and simply terrific to be alive'?" And you know what he said? He said, "Being interviewed by you, David." A marvellous compliment — and terrific television. Super!

JUST FANCY THAT!!



"Inside Woody Allen" Coronet Books 1979

8.30 WORLD IN ACTION. Documentary. *See Tonight's Choice. 4875.*
9.0 HEAD OVER HEELS. Camilla is far from happy when a princess arrives at the academy. **(T)** *9383.*

Daily Express

West Ham debate what they can do to change Dicks

The Times

Literary Review

Sexual boreplay

Not Guilty: In Defence of the Modern Man
David Thomas
Weidenfeld & Nicolson/Orion, £8.99 (paperback)

'ERE! Fancy buying the autobiography of that mediocre hack *who was* editor of *Punch* when it closed? No? Even an ex-editor of *Punch* can work that one out. Best pretend it's something else, then. That Neil Lyndon made a bit of a splash with his wee bollocks, *No More Sex War* or something, wasn't it? Why not me too?

So here we have David Thomas's memoirs, cross-dressed as "a meticulous account of the genetic, psychological and social roots of masculinity". On the cover is a huge endorsement from P.J. O'Rourke ("whose work I had the great pleasure of publishing in *Punch*", fawns Thomas). "A splendid book — a Charge of the Light Brigade against the batteries of current wisdom," says O'Rourke. It seems about right: some hideous blunder, quite pointless, and all that.

The message of this book is easily disposed of. Thomas thinks Feminism Has Gone Too Far, and men are now oppressed by women. This contention is put forward with the help of a ragbag of worthless statistics and tripey quotes. Thomas has no grasp whatsoever of what constitutes argument or proof. To show that men are unfairly treated at work, he offers "a pile of newspaper cuttings collected over the past two weeks.

Then he really gets down to the nitty-gritty. Feminists say that it's not fair that male tennis stars can win more than the women. But clever old Dave shows that the men play more games per match, and so they deserve it. Now there's an important point made.

What he's trying to prove, you see, is that "men and women are the same... but different". And he puts his literary talent to work to achieve it. For example, he tells us that "one way of looking at the male and female brains might be to imagine that they are two different types of computer — an IBM and a Macintosh, for example". As a master stylist, he picks up this image and runs with it. "The basic principles that govern them are the same. The actual wiring, however, is different. Nor can they read one another's software without a great deal of trouble." Explains a lot, don't it?

It's all scientific, like. "The corpus callosum — the bundle of nerves that links the left and right halves [of the brain], much like a cable links the units of a hi-fi — may be as much as 23 per cent thicker in women than in men." Coo! It's why they're all so bloody mad. "As a result, women may be able to 'access' much more of their brain at any one time... This might account for feminine intuition and also for the traditional female trait of adding an emotional element to problems which men believe are purely rational." Can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em, innit?

At one point, Thomas has a little outbreak of shame while describing the difference between men and women. "I am both simplifying and exaggerating," he admits. If only he had continued "and being generally stupid", he might have had the beginnings of wisdom.

But if the arguments are crap, the autobiography is creepily interesting. There's the usual bragging about his time at Eton — "a system that was designed to bring the best out of boys, intellectually, creatively, and on the sports field. It was certainly a world away from the non-achieving atmosphere that has been prevalent throughout much of English state school education over the last twenty years", arf arf — and King's College, Cambridge, where he "ran a student nightclub", the card.

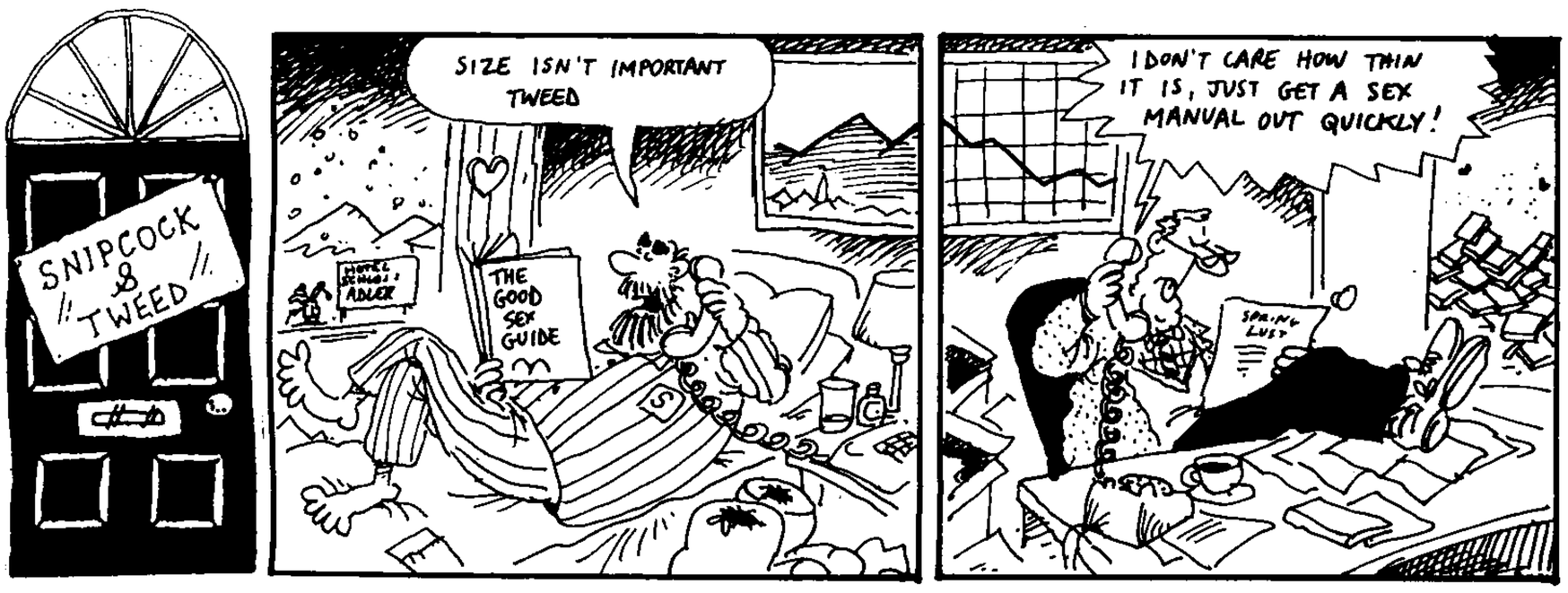
Then comes the glittering career, lightly dropped into the research thus: "In all my years as a journalist, including several spent as a senior executive on a number of publications, I am not aware that any of my female colleagues has ever been sexually harassed by me or anyone else." Then there's the crowning glory, *Punch*. "People who visited the office would remark upon the sexual energy that seemed to be fizzing about the place... Jokes winged back and forth between the men and the women." It's a wonder none of them ever crash-landed in the magazine.

Like Lyndon, Thomas turns out to be animated by a specific resentment against one woman — in his case, when he was an adolescent, a girlfriend dropped him and later refused to sleep with him because it wouldn't be fair to her new boyfriend. Thomas says it took him five years and "a fair amount of analysis" to get over this, and he hints that her behaviour was as bad as that which gets men convicted of rape. "There is... no equivalent protection given to men against the manipulation of their feelings or sexuality", he complains. Diddums.

Some of his outbursts display still uncontrolled hatred. "However erect a man may be when he goes in, by the time he comes out he is flaccid and spent... feminism chooses to think of the phallus as the source of all threat, but in the battle between cock and cunt, the cock always comes out the loser," he remarks, charmingly. Divorcing husbands must be careful not "to consent to sex" with their wives, he advises. "Because if you do, she won't be the only one who's fucked." Nice.

His own sexuality is evidently daffy. He's obsessed with transvestism and transsexualism — not just Jan Morris's, his own. He excitedly describes how at a Cambridge party he once got "the studs of the university, the hard-drinking, red-blooded heroes" into frocks with him, and how, more recently, he got dolled up again, "tucking my private parts into the cache-sex... strapping on a vast, barmaid's bra stuffed with rubber titties..." It's no surprise when he names as his "modern heroes" Stephen Hawking, Sean Connery, Gary Lineker — and Quentin Crisp. "Here is a limp-wristed, mauve-dyed, rouged and mascara'd, effeminate homosexual... and yet he has lived the life he wanted to live." Thomas envies him.

There are valid points that can be made on behalf of men: retirement ages aren't equal, nor is child access; men's health receives less attention than women's although they die earlier; women are perfectly capable of violence in the home... But Thomas's advocacy serves only to discredit them: a gift to the feminists he most loathes. Back to the dressing-table, Dave.



Books & Bookmen

☐ **AS READERS of the last *Eye* will recall, OUP declined to publish Andrew Malcolm's witty philosophical treatise, *Making Names*. When the manuscript emerged last August from its lengthy *sub judice* twilight, it was published by the previously unknown Brighton imprint of ACME at the eccentric price of £24.90.**

Given the national press coverage of little Malcolm's fight against the Oxford eunuchs, it might have been assumed that the book, intended for the general reader, would be reviewed widely, if only to see whether it was any good. Not one newspaper touched it, in spite of the fact that philosophical gurus such as Alan Ryan and Galen Strawson are quoted on the back of the jacket recommending it.

The *Times Educational Supplement* approached various "name" philosophers to review the controversial tome, but so all-embracing and insidious are the academic world and OUP that, by bewildering coincidence, every one declined. It was eventually (25 September, 1992) enthusiastically reviewed by linguistics expert R.W. Noble, himself in dispute with OUP, to the rage of OUP's chief executive, Sir Roger "Rabbit" Elliott.

■ DILLONS Bookshop had a particularly dull year, but Terry Maher continues to believe that discounting books results in increased sales which, year in, year out, is disproved by the fact that the total number of books sold doesn't go up. Panties, who heavily promoted Madonna's magnum opus under the elegant slogan "Cheaper Sex at Dillons", Books Etc and other chains, are thought to have substantial quantities of the reprint of the plastic bagged *Sex* object gathering dust in their drawers.

'Bookworm'

TARMAC AND THE TORIES

Sold — to the friendliest bidder

THE *EYE* has received a fascinating "briefing document" written by a disenchanted official of the Property Services Agency soon after the flagrant hand-out (*Shurely "legitimate sale"? Ed.*) **of the PSA's Projects Division last October to Tarmac, the construction giant and huge donor to Tory party funds.**

The "sale" included a generous grant of about £75 million (and rising) of taxpayers' money to Tarmac; and the briefing appears to have been to prepare opposition MPs on what awkward questions to ask the government.

Referring to the rival bid for PSA by a consortium of Halcrow and Pell Frischmann, it says: "It is odd that Tarmac's overall bid should have been so close to that of Halcrow/Pell Frischmann when its long-term staffing estimates and therefore redundancy liabilities were so much greater."

The document also quotes "a very reliable senior internal source" that regular meetings were held between PSA board member Robin Gray and Tarmac at Tarmac's London flat, and between Brian Jefferson, PSA's managing director, and Tarmac at the firm's HQ in Wolverhampton — this last meeting only a month before the bid was won.

The document concludes: "None of this proves that the Halcrow/Pell Frischmann bid was leaked to Tarmac but it does, if true, point to a high degree of collusion between Tarmac and the Projects Board". It suggests that a parliamentary question asking for details of all meetings between PSA Projects directors and Tarmac between October 1991 and October 1992 might reveal interesting answers.

The document also refers to the ways in which PSA's Projects Division was prepared for serving up to Tarmac — most notably the achievement of Projects director Gordon Dugood (*sic*) in reversing the process whereby PSA used to insist on getting 75 per cent of its projects fees at the end of the design stage, and 25 per cent when the building was finished.

By insisting on only 25 per cent at end of design stage, this brilliant stroke ensured that the bulk of the fees on all projects under way when the "sale" was completed will eventually end up in the coffers of... Tarmac.

One of the best aspects of the deal, however, is that any redundancies of former PSA Projects staff will cost Tarmac nothing. The government, in the shape of that devoted keeper of the public purse, minister of state John Redwood, has happily agreed to pay.

Now John Rowcliffe, chairman of PSA Projects, is telling senior staff that Tarmac will only be wanting 400-odd of the 860 who joined him from the civil service. The rest will just go down the road in the usual way... but the government will pick up the bill!

Generous friends in low places

RECESSION-hit Tarmac, which put former Tory minister Cecil Parkinson on its board at the height of his embarrassment over the Sarah Keays affair, has had a rotten report from the all-important IBCA credit agency — but its friends in government have been bending over backwards to help out.

While its debt rating has fallen below investment grade — from something called BBB to BB+ — and its commercial paper rating has plummeted from A3 to B, IBCA says: "The near-term outlook for its core business profitability remains poor, and financial protection measures could well deteriorate further in 1993".

But in such dark times, Brian Staples, the Tarmac chief executive, and his team can always rely on help from Tarmac's last remaining collective fan: the government.

The first piece of good news for Staples is that the department of the environment has made it clear that its own publicly-owned subsidiary, BM South East, will not be tendering for the hugely lucrative contract to rebuild Windsor Castle.

One reason for this curious decision is that the whole Windsor Castle bill will be met by the taxpayer, so its seems to ministers unfair that a single penny of it should in any way be earned by a company owned by the taxpayer. Ministers prefer the many millions spent on the castle to get into the hands of a private company (like Tarmac), especially if that company continues giving money to the Tories. Another windfall for private enterprise from this decision is that when BM itself is sold off, its price will be much lower than its billion-pound turnover might suggest.

But the most remarkable largesse from government to Tarmac has been revealed by a question from Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes to the transport minister. Hughes asked for a list of construction contracts worth more than £250,000 awarded by the transport department over the last five years.

The list which followed, taking up four and a half pages of Hansard, was fascinating.

It showed that Tarmac won £76 million out of a total of £431 million worth of contracts in 1988; £23 million out of £340 million in 1989; £124 million out of a total of £587 million in 1990; and £77 million out of £476 million in 1991.

These were all hefty slices of the total — the 1990 Tarmac share being more than a fifth. But in 1992, as the recession really bit and problems for Tarmac grew, the department of transport could barely contain its generosity. Though it let only £262 million worth of construction contracts, a fantastic £112 million of that went to... Tarmac.

Experts are racking their brains to think of any other time in the rich history of patronage by the department of transport when one firm won 40 per cent of the construction contracts. Meanwhile, it is rumoured that Sir Christopher Patten, the governor of Hong Kong, may be visiting England soon. If so, he may find time for a trip to Tarmac's Wolverhampton HQ to discuss the firm's bids to build the new Hong Kong airport — one of the most lucrative contracts left in what's left of the British Empire.

WINSON GREEN

A blow to morale

THE violent and brutal officers who run Birmingham's Winson Green prison themselves suffered a rude blow recently — from the usually-loyal judiciary.

Convicted murderer John Bowden sued the home office claiming that he was assaulted by a gang of drunken officers just one hour after he arrived at the prison — and that he suffered a series of later attacks.

A succession of prison officers gave evidence to Birmingham county court judge David Roberts, describing Bowden's rowdy behaviour and how they had had to restrain him. Judge Roberts decided they were lying and awarded Bowden more than £3,000 damages.

More interesting was the evidence of Dr Gillian Jones, the prison's acting senior medical officer at the time. She told the court she admitted Bowden to the prison hospital after the assault. She added that she was "aware of the hostility from prison officers" and decided to keep him in hospital for his own safety.

Crucially, she said: "I was concerned that if he went back he would be at risk of being assaulted. I had seen several other prisoners who alleged they had been assaulted and they had injuries very much consistent with an assault."

Dr Jones's evidence was backed by several prisoners. The prison officers' credibility was so evidently low that Judge Roberts decided to dismiss their evidence in favour of the convicted criminals.

HEALTH AUTHORITIES

Barking, but with a useless byte

WHILE the Royal United Hospital in genteel Bath is so broke it is turning away emergencies, the scandal of how its overseer, Wessex regional health authority, wasted £43 million on a redundant computer system from IBM rumbles on (see *Eyes passim*).

The IBM consultant involved was Harry Tuffill. It was his job to ensure that the health authority's system was checked by two computer programmes designed to guard against salesmen or customers ordering an unworkable configuration. Neither programme was run.

Wessex's ill-fated scheme to introduce computers at regional and district level was initiated in 1984, but the decision to purchase a £3.3 million computer to operate it was not taken until March 1989 by Wessex RHA chairman, Sir Robin Buchanan. Sir Robin was chairman of Bath district health authority until August 1988 — by when it was already apparent that the scheme was an expensive disaster.

Despite this, Sir Robin signed a purchase agreement that contained no provision for normal penalty clauses and committed the RHA to pay for 104 operational staff when only 60 were working. He also neglected to tell other RHA members of his decision. After an 18-month delay — in which time the value of the computer had fallen by £2.3 million — the £3.3 million hardware was finally commissioned.

The main consultants for the project, Arthur Anderson, secured their bid despite an initial poor showing after obtaining confidential information about their competitors' tenders. The whole fiasco remained covered up until Ken Jarrold took over as regional general manager in 1990 and ordered an inquiry. Sir Robin remained silent throughout and refused to endorse the district auditor's report, which strongly recommended the RHA seek legal advice and consider taking action against IBM and Arthur Andersen to recover its money. Mr Jarrold has ducked out of such action claiming it would be "too costly".

Sir Robin has since extended his repertoire to become chairman of the new National Health Service supplies authority, but others have not been so lucky. Harry Tuffil has left IBM; and IBM has just suffered its worst ever quarter of "negative revenue". And the ill and injured continue to be turned away by Bath's Royal United Hospital...

Me and Mrs Jones...

SOUTH GLAMORGAN health authority provoked a barrage of complaints earlier this month when it announced plans to axe six hospitals, including the much-loved Cardiff Royal Infirmary.

The man wielding the scalpel is Ian Grist, the authority's chair and, until booted out of his Cardiff Central seat last April, the Welsh Office minister in char[illegible] of health in the principality.

It came as no great surprise to local cynics when he landed the job; but the speed with which the 54-year-old plans to carve more than 1,000 beds from South Glamorgan's 2,300-odd has upset everyone from NUPE to the BMA.

South Glamorgan is not unused to bizarre appointments. Late last year a touching everyday story of Jones folk unfolded. Mrs Carolyn Jones, constituency secretary to Gwilym Jones, MP for Cardiff North (no relation) and the minister who took over from the defeated Grist, was appointed a member of the authority. A nice little earner, the job pays £5,000 a year for three days' hard grind a month. Opposition MPs rebelled. They claimed that her husband belonged to the same masonic lodge as her boss (that's Gwilym Jones MP, in case there's any confusion).

Rhodri Morgan, Labour MP for Cardiff West, declared: "This is one party political appointment too far"; and signatures to a critical motion were collected. Mrs Jones withdrew.

IN THE COURTS

Eye was done

CHANGES in libel procedures proposed by Lord Mackay, the lord chancellor, are less likely to discourage greed-driven litigants from the great libel casino than the expensive rebuffs suffered by Jani Allen and William "Interesting" Roache.

But one loophole the judges continue to dance around is the ability of penniless plaintiffs with marginal if not derisory cases to force newspapers into defending themselves with no prospect of recovering the substantial costs involved.

The British legal system, unlike that in the United States, operates on the principle of loser pays all. But what happens when the loser says he or she can't pay or won't pay? Here the courts stay strangely silent, the assumption being that when it comes to libel, if the newspaper loses it pays and if it wins it should also pay.

Proof of that principle was recently provided by the final chapter in Dunn v Pressdram — one of the few libel cases *Private Eye* has won. Edward Dunn, former righthand man of Ravendale share shop swindler Chander Singh, with his paymaster sued over a 1984 Slicker item. Both were represented by lawyer Richard Sykes, himself a Ravendale client, a sole practitioner and longtime libel adviser to the Telegraph group — as befits a man with impeccable Monday Club credentials.

Ravendale collapsed in November 1986, amid allegations of fraud and mob connections, leaving clients minus £1 million. That, it might have been thought, would have been the end of that — libel, after all, is about reputation and neither Singh nor Dunn had much of that. But justice is not blind for nothing, and in the weird and wacky world of libel facts never get in the way of potential big fees. The action continued as if both men were pillars of the City establishment without a stain on their characters. Subsequently Singh and Dunn were disqualified by the department of trade and industry from acting as directors after a highly critical report by the official receiver into the Ravendale collapse.

In November 1987 Singh was struck out of the case when he failed to come up with £7,500 — the Ravendale founder had fled to India, although Sykes continued to insist he would return to prove his innocence. As Singh was abroad the courts could order that he put up security for defence costs. This protection, however, does not exist when a plaintiff is resident in Britain.

Dunn, however, pressed on, aided by Sykes. But three months before the trial in June 1989 Sykes abandoned Dunn, who continued as a litigant in person. Sykes had suddenly discovered that Dunn had not only no job, but no home and no money either. This revelation followed by weeks Sykes finally having to concede defeat for a second time in Singh's litigation with the *Observer*, when the conman failed to show at trial. The lawyer had to pay £55,000 towards the *Observer*'s costs, which exceeded £250,000. The £55,000 had been guaranteed by a third party whom Sykes refused to identify.

After a very brief hearing Judge Michael Davies, a man with no love for *Private Eye*, reluctantly ruled the article not capable of the defamatory meaning Dunn, and previously Sykes and QC Patrick Milmo, had claimed. Clearly unhappy, Davies awarded only two-thirds of the defence costs.

After more than two years of high court induced delays, the *Eye* obtained an order for costs of £37,790 against Dunn. A bankruptcy notice was served on Dunn, who was traced to an address in Shipley, Yorkshire, where he was working as... a financial consultant.

Examined before the bankruptcy court in February 1992, the all but penniless Dunn revealed that he had never paid Sykes any money; that Sykes had never asked for any money until shortly before he ceased to act; and that he assumed all the time that the *Eye* would pay when it lost.

On this evidence *Private Eye* sought to have Sykes pay, as without his generosity Dunn could not have persisted with a flawed case. But there is little enthusiasm among the judges for making solicitors pay for their clients — this could hit both pockets and reputations. Lawyers cannot maintain (finance on credit) any but particularly a speculative action, but the definitions are far too vague to be of use to those seeking support from the courts.

Despite the fact that Sykes had continued to act for the unemployed and unemployable Dunn, financing his own time and counsels' costs, this was held last November not to equal maintenance as there was no agreement that Dunn should not pay and Sykes had asked for money before abandoning him. And despite the outcome of the case and Dunn's complete lack of reputation, nor was the action speculative!

So even after winning the *Eye* lost and is out of pocket. However, Sykes may well have had to eat a similar sized bill — assuming he did not again have a secret backer, something he denies.

The Singh and Dunn cases suggest it is time Lord Mackay considered allowing judges to determine at an early stage if a libel case has merit or not. If the judge ruled it did not then, if plaintiffs want to continue, they should provide some security for defendants' costs. That would not prevent those of modest means pursuing justifiable actions against wealthy newspapers — indeed it would be an incentive for newspapers to settle — but it might discourage crooks and their legal advisers.

CHILD SEX ABUSE

The off scot-freemason?

NORTH WALES detectives investigating the alleged involvement of no fewer than 12 serving and former colleagues in the country's biggest-ever child sex abuse scandal are running into an unforeseen problem.

The crown prosecution service (CPS) seems reluctant to prosecute anyone for well-documented cases of rape, buggery and indecent assault involving young boys who were in care over a 20-year period.

The reluctance has nothing to do with the involvement of a number of the local great and good as members of a paedophile ring, which regularly used homes, like the now-closed Bryn Estyn near Wrexham, to supply boys for sex to local celebrities.

In late 1970s, Superintendent Gordon Anglesea of the North Wales police was appointed to investigate an allegation of buggery made by Steven Messham against the son of a then member of the North Wales police authority. The Supt found there was no case to answer. Coincidentally the police authority member and Supt Anglesea were prominent masons.

Although senior police officers knew five years ago that Anglesea was alleged to have buggered boys in care at Bryn Estyn and that he had also forced them to have oral sex with him on several occasions, he has been enjoying a well-earned retirement.

Even after being named in an *Independent* story over a year ago, featuring on the front page of the *Observer* last September and being named in an HTV broadcast, also in September, no action was taken until he "voluntarily" agreed to an interview last month.

Since no fewer than six of his former colleagues have already been told that the CPS has returned their files marked "no action", Anglesea is confident no charges will be forthcoming.

Meanwhile Steven Messham, one of the few victims prepared to stand up and be counted, was recently beaten up by unknown assailants while visiting the Wrexham home of one Garry Cook, aka Mark Jones, who was convicted of paedophile offences in 1980 while working in a children's home, convicted of buggery after being reemployed in another children's home after his release in 1986 and who is now working in an old people's home at Llay, near Wrexham.

To add to the lustre of the dull town of Wrexham as the putative paedophile capital of Wales, Inspector Dai Knacker and his team are also urgently seeking to interview one John Allen, a businessman who used to operate a private children's home complex called the Bryn Alyn community.

It is understood they wish to find out why he gave a former resident of one of his homes a post-dated cheque for £2,500. John Allen has been unavailable since early October and is understood to be in New York pursuing other business interests. This may explain why he has been unable to keep up mortgage payments on a house in Wrexham's Queens Park which he bought three years ago for another Bryn Alyn old boy. Nor has he paid his dues to his masonic lodge.

With all these masons cropping up, it's a relief to know that the man heading the North Wales police inquiry, Superintendent Peter Ackerley, was able to tell journalists last year that one of his qualifications was that he himself was *not* a mason.

WATER

Torrent of abuse

A BATTLE is raging between the privatised water companies and the office of water regulation (Ofwat) over how much money can be squeezed out of the public to satisfy shareholders and how much must be spent — or can be skimped — to make our water clean.

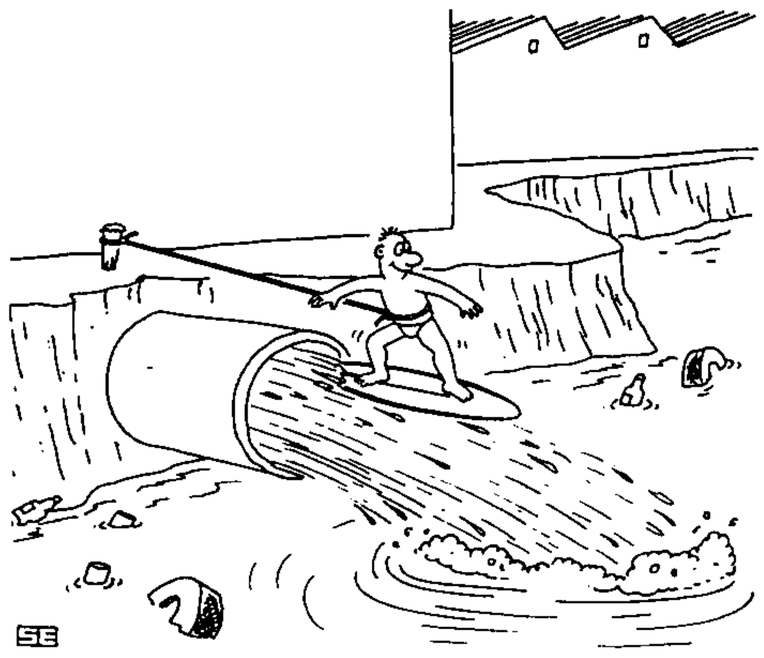
The regulator has allowed the water companies to raise prices by 5 percent more than inflation since they were privatised, on the grounds that they have to improve the quality of their supply. But they have also been able to become the best performing sector on the stock market, with share prices rising 50 percent last year. There is thus a smidge of suspicion that the public is not getting a fair deal.

Ian Byatt, the Ofwat chief, has now appointed accountants Peat Marwick to "develop guidelines" to ensure that the companies are not engaging in "cross-subsidisation". Some of them have diversified and, says Ofwat, there is a "complex relationship" between the regulated business of water supply and the other, unregulated activities like exploiting their land and property holdings.

The implication is that in engaging in non-regulated activities, water companies might — perish the thought — allocate some of the costs and profits to the wrong company. This is close to saying that Ofwat has brought in an outside auditor to ensure no one is fiddling the books at the expense of the people paying water charges.

Byatt started the war with a pamphlet called *Cost of Capital*, which argued that 5 percent was an adequate return for investors. The water companies snarled back that Byatt was responding to political pressure. He hit back with a gripping work called *Assessing capital values at the periodic review*, arguing that the rotting sewers and ancient pipelines of the water industry should be valued at £12 billion, and saying that this meant the industry was awarding itself an 11 percent return on capital.

The industry retorted with *A Response by the Water Services Association and the Water Companies Association*, which said the value should be updated to £100 billion. This could mean even higher dividends and charges for water. Byatt is about to reply with another volume explaining how wrong they are, but he is caught in the crossfire. Environmental controls are set by the EC, and he has made it clear that he is sceptical about the need for such high standards. He would like to see less pure water so long as it was cheap. The water companies would also like to spend less on improving quality, but they would want to give the winnings to their shareholders.



In the City

" THE DIRECTORS did not know and were not involved in the dirty tricks campaign." With that reassuring bucket of whitewash British Airways chief executive Sir Colin Marshall sought to end the hacking, shredding, passenger poaching, bad mouthing, rubbish stealing scandal of BA's anti-Virgin Atlantic campaign.

Luckily for Marshall the non-executive BA boardroom "patsies" would seem to believe that statement just as much as they believed the earlier assurances he and his arch-rival, chairman Lord King, gave the same directors that there was no truth to the allegations made by Virgin's Richard Branson only months before BA paid £3.6 million in libel damages and costs.

But just how credible or even truthful is what King and Marshall would have their gullible BA cronies (whom they appointed) and the world believe?

Let us start with the weasel words used by BA in making its unconditional surrender-style "settlement" with Branson. BA directors, it said, had not been aware of any "concerted campaign" against Virgin. Notice they carefully did not deny they were aware of a "campaign". Hardly surprising given what King, Marshall and head of marketing Robert Ayling knew. That same message comes through the double talk in King's second public apology where the emphasis was on the absence of any "wide-ranging" conspiracy. Conspiracy yes, wide-ranging no.

If BA directors knew nothing about "dirty tricks", why then should its sacked public relations consultant Brian Basham be given information by a director linking Branson's London nightclub Heaven, a favourite among homosexual ravers, to drugs and encouraged to pass this to journalists?

If BA directors were not involved in a "concerted campaign", why should Basham initially be provided by a director with information about Virgin's poor punctuality performance out of and into Heathrow, information which was so sensitive that it was finally made clear it could not be given to the press because its source (not airport observation) could not be revealed?

If (as the second BA public statement declared) directors had given assurances that they neither "implemented or authorised" any "disreputable" or "improper" action against Virgin, why did BA collapse rather than have King, Marshall and others cross-examined by Virgin's grand inquisitor, George Carman QC, about exactly what they did know, when they knew it and what they did about it? Might a jury have been less gullible than the BA non-executives? But then what were they going to say — yes I did it, but please don't tell?

What has already emerged without denial about the anti-Virgin activities and Operation Covent Garden, aka the hunt for the BA mole, indicates a degree of proved or assumed knowledge which could only be refuted by a parallel policy of wilful blindness on the part of senior executives. Marshall in particular is renowned as a "hands-on" manager, while Basham and his link man, PR director David Burnside (who knew about Covent Garden), reported not only to him but had a direct line to King.

It is hard to believe, therefore, that the essence if not the detail of what was happening under the direct control of the directors of marketing, public relations and security did not reach executive directors King, Marshall and Ayling. Are we seriously to believe that underlings alone did bad or dubious things without ever informing their superiors? But then a wise man would not want to know too much.

The "no need to know" policy was also at work when it came to the mole hunt which ended with the wretched John Reilly being fined for stealing a *Sunday Times* journalists' rubbish. BA employed a number of private detectives using as "cut-outs" Ian Johnson and Carratu International. Both of these fine upstanding operators assure clients they will indulge only in legal activities, which clearly excludes theft. But the "contractors" and "sub-contractors" like Reilly sign no such agreements. Their role is to do whatever it takes on the understanding that they take the heat if it goes wrong. That way the client has "plausible deniability". In this case the system failed. Reilly was hung out to dry. There were disputes between the players about payment. The dustbin caper unravelled.

Which brings us to the two internal investigations into the Virgin allegations carried out by solicitors Linklaters & Paines, reporting to legal director Mervyn Walker. That number one found nothing of the evidence which forced BA's abject surrender is no surprise. Such internal "investigations" by company lawyers are rarely hunts for the truth. The brief is more often to say that no wrongdoing took place or if it did that no director knew. If BA had wanted to find the truth it would have hired an outside law firm. But that way embarrassment lies, especially if certain directors already know the truth.

It would be most unlikely if Marshall had not known about the activities of his American hatchet man, Michael Levin, who, until forced out by King, lived in the inter-connected office next door. Marshall is believed to have maintained contact with Levin after he was fired. Levin, it has since emerged, was spreading anti-BA/anti-King stories directly and indirectly to Branson. Whether he was indeed the mole that Covent Garden was set up to unmask remains a matter for speculation. But it is hardly surprising if Levin's role was not exactly fully explored by Linklaters in the first investigation.

For the second cover-up (oops) "investigation" it is understood the same intrepid truth seekers relied extensively on affidavits given for the Virgin action, rather than grilling the BA executives and outsiders again. Those affidavits were to be seen by Virgin so were hardly in the way of legal tactics, the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Damaging admissions rarely find their way into such documents. Indeed, one such affidavit maker recalls being asked to omit much of what he knew!

How unsurprising again, therefore, that Linklaters now discover only a "small number of unconnected incidents" involving a "very small number of BA staff". These incidents were not, it seems, uncovered by the previous thorough probe. But then Linklaters had to find something in order not to appear complete dupes. However, it is hardly likely that, like the non-executives who bought the previous "no truth" explanation and cannot now admit to being fooled, Linklaters were going to show themselves up by stumbling over skeletons they missed the first time. Much easier to burn an outside consultant like Basham and later on Burnside and Ayling's successor Walker.

If BA wanted to regain its phoney claim to be the world's favourite airline it would publish the 80-page Linklater report. Shareholders could then judge whether the directors are telling the truth. Meanwhile they can only speculate about what criticisms it makes of Burnside, Walker, security director David Hyde and other BA executives for being either over-enthusiastic or incompetent or both.

The report is understood to dwell on the role played in the most damning activities — Mission Atlantic's hacking, poaching and shredding — by the BA marketing department, whose line of command lead directly to Marshall's desk. It is believed to discuss the role played by former marketing chief Liam Strong, who suddenly departed in 1991 to run stores group Sears where Marshall was once a director. Just what Strong, an aggressive ambitious man, knew is part of the puzzle which has so far escaped attention. His departure resulted in the elevation of Ayling, another Marshall man, from another key position as company secretary and legal director.

Just as arrest of the Watergate burglars lit the fuse which two years later blew Richard Nixon out of the White House, so Reilly and Basham are the blue touchpaper which leads to the bomb inside the BA executive suite. The stain of guilt at Speedbird House is slowly spreading up the building through the offices of the cut outs' contact men. If, as seems likely, BA rewards Marshall by making him chairman and sacrifices his and King's little helpers, such as Burnside and Walker, they had better make sure they are paid to keep their mouths shut. A repeat of the £10,000 goodbye to Basham is unlikely to get it done. "Honest Merv" may be one thing, but "Deadly Dave" is another. Having the Ulsterman outside and pissing in could be as fatal to Marshall (saved once by Levin's convenient death last year, although his files may yet tell an interesting story) as "Deep Throat" was to Nixon.

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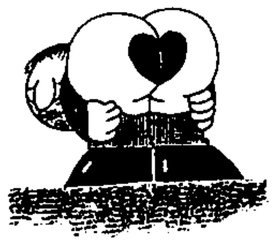

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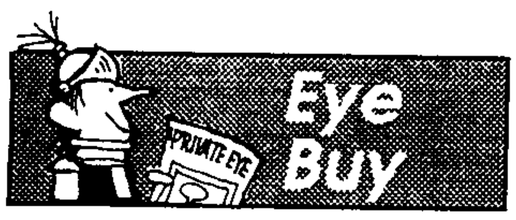

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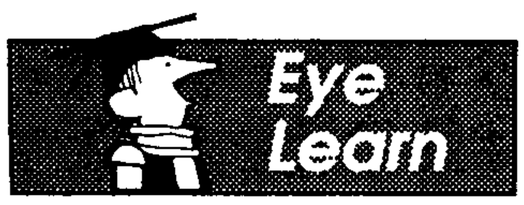

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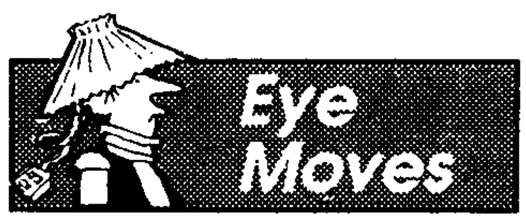

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TOY BOYS, 21, available. Manchester undergraduates seek wicked, wealthy women for further education. Box 4212.

NEW YEAR BLUES? Tall, good looking, late thirties Bristol man is seeking some mid week fun with an attractive woman. If you would like to brighten up this dull month, please write to me with your telephone number to Box 4812.

LAME ENERGETIC healthy gentleman 53 with ruined castle estate for sympathetic leisure development seeks independent younger lady with or without children for partnership and rural family life. Intelligence and verve essential. Box 5412.

YOUNG (32) MALE golf rabbit (Bucks) seeks birdie to play around with. Will go a fairway to meet a suitable girl. Non-pro preferred — nothing rough or handicapped. Guaranteed not to putter in club (dodgy niblick). Photo essential — eagles, albatrosses and vultures need not apply. Box 5512.

EVERYTHING BUT the girl. Successful interesting male, 25, Scorpio, a really nice guy (the type your mother always asked you to look out for) seeks female for good times and maybe more. Midlands/anywhere. Go on, reply, you read the ad! Box 5612.

LIBIDINOUS MALE, 35, own hair, teeth, walking boots, seeks slim rude woman for long wild walks and evenings. Phone/photo please. Box 8012.

SOLVENT BUT disorganised bachelor (32) seeks slim efficient jeans and trainers type with big smile for warm stress-free relationship. Southeast. Box 4912.

INCURABLE OPTIMIST (40) seeks transcendental tantric liaison with tallish tactile temptress. Now. (Maybe forever?) Box 5012.

MALE 32 SEEKS stylish female for discreet liaisons. Status/age/location immaterial. Box 5112.

SOCIAL THEORIST, charming, kind, comical, Cambridge-based, doesn't want much; just an intelligent, imaginative, affectionate, sane, voluptuous woman. Box 5712.

HOPELESSLY ATTRACTIVE intelligent and witty lawyer 28 seeks hopelessly similar female for hopelessly good times together. Hopeless photo please. Hopelessly London. Box 5812.

"WOMEN ON TOP". Handsome Yorkshireman 40ish conducting practical research. Box 5912.

NOW AVAILABLE, humorous travelled affluent erudite thoughtful male, 44, seeking positive creative witty gentle female 28-38. Arts/academic/teaching background? Interests music, travel, theatre, pubs, teas, walking. London, South, Bristol. Photo welcomed. Box 6012.

STYLISH EUROPEAN woman, 40, n/s, is keen to meet 35-48 n/s highly motivated man to share the same enthusiasms and experiences: keeping fit, cinema, stimulating conversation, squash, excellent food, wine, travelling, good books, successes etc. Box 6112.

PRIZE STALLION seeks attractive frisky London filly, SoH, 35ish. Box 6212.

WOMAN, YOUNG 43, in successful celibate marriage seeks discreet man 40-60 for sexy brunches. Culture, SoH, lust rather than money so no tories, directors or other weirdos. No strings but long term preferred. West Yorkshire ono. Box 6312.

SHY — OR PROUD that your bra size ends with D, DD or E? Discreet, slim, humorous writer/musician offers awe and admiration! Box 6412.

LADY GRADUATE, 50, separated, teenaged children, domiciled Ireland, seeks man of substance. Box 7712.

JAKE BLUES seeks Carrie Fisher. No guns please. Box 5212.

BLONDE, BLUE EYED lass seeks boyfriend, Somerset/Avon area. Box 5312.

ANARCHIST TEACHER, single, male, 36, seeks lady soulmate for fun, theatre, cinema, books, travel, romantic sex. Kent/London/anywhere. Box 6712.

ECCENTRIC CUDDLY lawyer (35) (5'7") seeks attractive professional female for sensual relationship. London. Box 6812.

JUST SURFACING. Attractive, tall graduate entrepreneur, male 34, materially very successful, slighly bohemian/musical, unpretentious, sincere, seeks feminine, slim, bright female under 30 (who wouldn't normally consider answering advertisements) for friendship and hopefully more. Midlands/anywhere. Photograph/telephone appreciated. Box 6912.

HANDSOME, 26, NEEDS wealthy widow. Hampshire/abroad. Box 7012.

ENGLISH EUROPEAN boy, 28, funny, kind, romantic, adventurous, seeks similar European girl to learn a European language together! Photo appreciated. Box 7112.

BIG BITCH SEEKS sexy male companion for mistress (29). Must like chasing sticks, Winalot, mud, pursuing small mammals and/or books, poetry, fantasy, kissing and laughing. Imaginative letter ensures reply. Box 7212.

AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN, 40 (Leo), goodlooking, caring, fun, together, dependable, financially successful with cozy W1 flat seeks very shapely, easygoing, personable woman for (free) live in relationship. Photo must. Box 7312.

LA PERLA, LA SCALA — I always confuse them! Man 48 would like to meet woman who knows the difference. Box 7412.

BRISTOL-ISH TALL shapely blonde seeks discreet fun man 35+. Box 7512.

ATTRACTIVE MAN, 48, seeks pretty, slim, sensual girlfriend, 18-25, for indulgent erotic spring holiday. Photo appreciated. Box 7612.

OXFORD: TALL, slim, darkhaired woman, 40s, seeks emotionally aware, intelligent, humorous soulmate. Box 6512.

SINGLE MALE, 29, graduate professional, seeks attractive, intelligent female, perhaps interested in music, sport for friendship/romance. London. Box 7812.

MALE STUDENT (23) seeks Lady Chatterley. Box 7912.

LITTLE NELL, 61, seeks her Daniel Quilp for walkabout. London. Box 6612.

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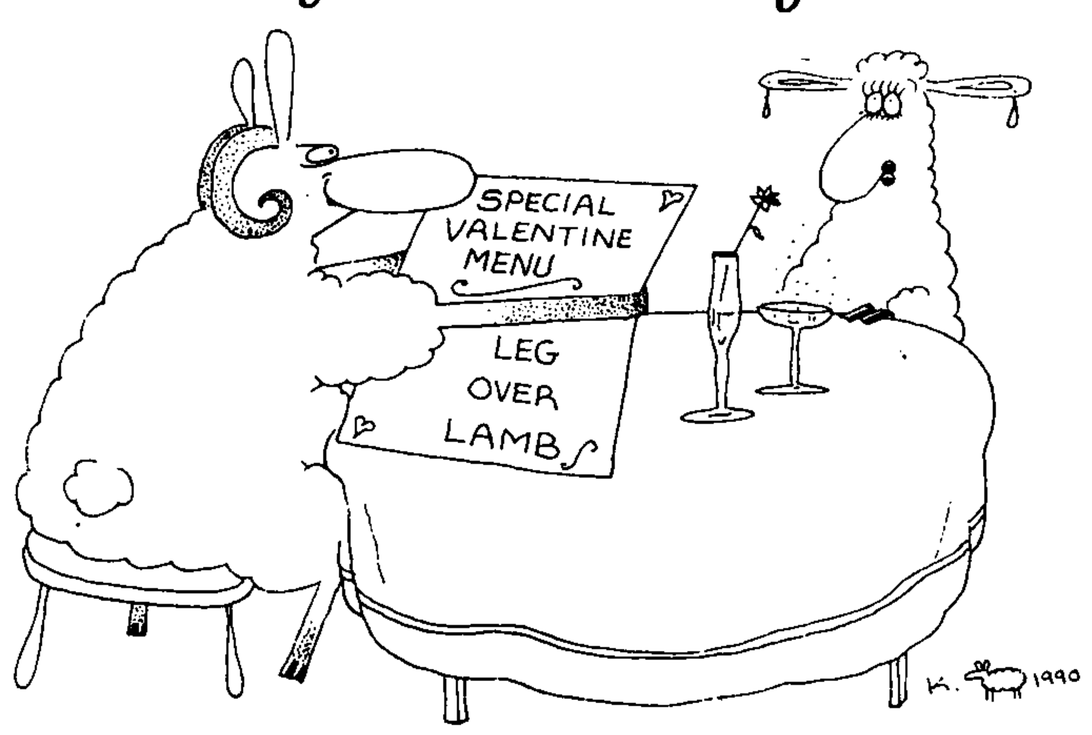

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SOPHISTICATED, ATTRACTIVE, petite, vivacious, brunette lady, 32, with wit, charm and style, seeks tall, dark, handsome, successful, professional man, 35/42 for love. Ring 0839 514124

HAEMORRHOID SUFFERER finds it painful to sit down, seeks attractive lady with view to long standing relationship. I am a solvent, 48 yr old professional gent. Manchester area. Ring 0839 514129

MALE, 35, SELF EMPLOYED computer professional, likes travel, music, cinema, eating out, seeks attractive intelligent female, maybe a little outgoing, for outings and perhaps relationship. Ring 0839 514150

SLIM, BLONDE, 29 year old lawyer, seeks intelligent, handsome, affectionate man, 28-40, to share, country walks, evenings out, and possibly romance. Ring 0839 514165

AMAZINGLY BEAUTIFUL, long blonde haired lady, with 2 adorable children and sweet dog, residing in Barnes, seeks the ultimate gentleman (44+) for total bliss xxx. Ring 0839 514176

DUSKY BEAUTY, thirtysomething, seeks professional man, 36-60. I am medium build, 5ft 4in, and looking for some TLC from a genuine person. Ring 0839 514185

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AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN, 40, good looking, well dressed, financially successful, without children, nice W1 flat, open, honest, together, fun, dependable, seeks, very shapely, loyal, personable girl friend. Ring 0839 514216

ATTRACTIVE SLIM LADY, sense of humour, likes travel, theatre, wining and dining, radio 4, seeks warm, articulate man for friendship and possible long term relationship. Ring 0839 514224

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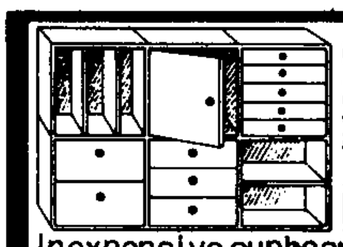

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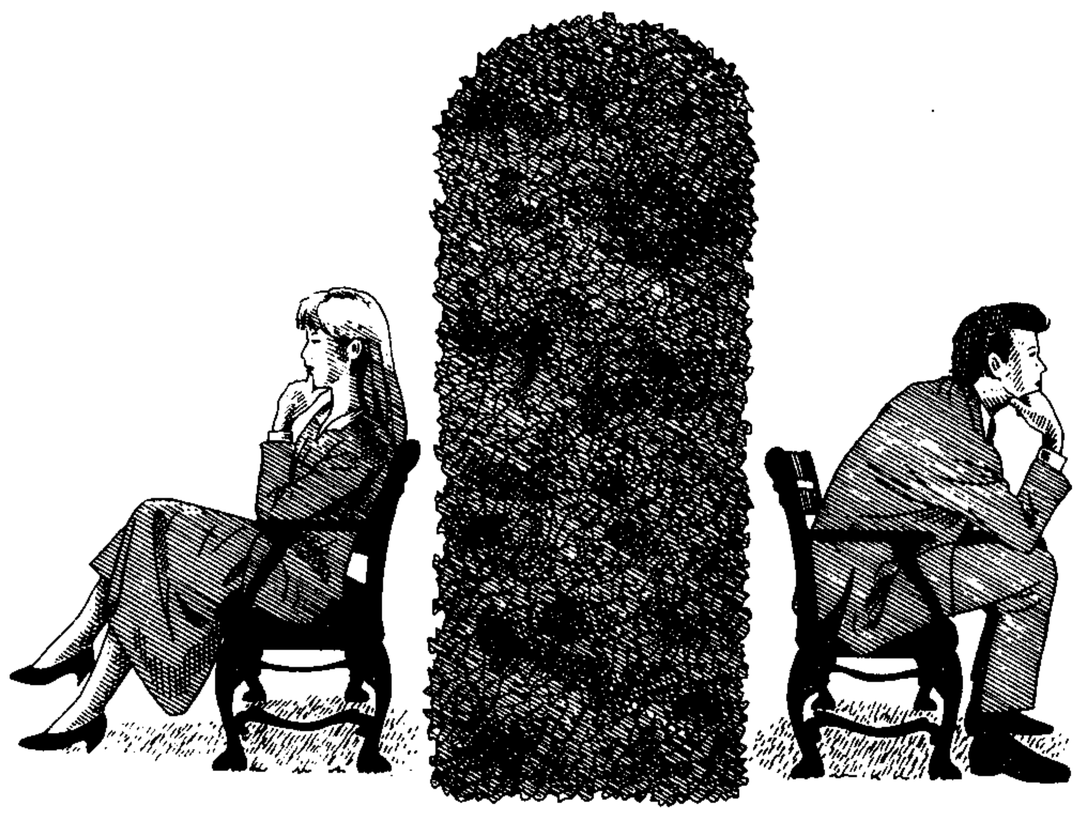

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